

**DRAGONS**  
**AND**  
**CHERRY-**  
**BLOSSOMS**

## **Table of Contents**

FOREIGN RESIDENTS.

SHOPPING.

OUR DINNER AT KIOTO.

MIYAKO ODORI.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KAKEMONO.

A GLIMPSE OF ROYALTY.

FIN DE SIÈCLE JAPAN.

CHO AND EBA.

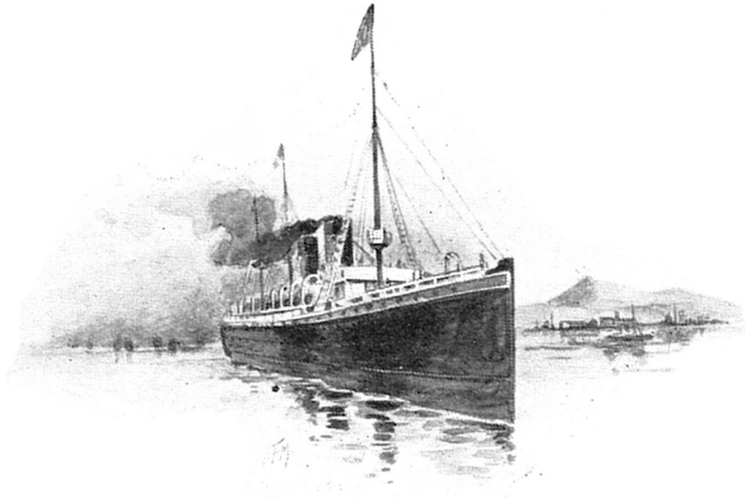
TO  
MY HUSBAND.



Clad in native costume.

MANY have been before me, and the theme of this volume can hardly be called new, for Japan has been viewed from every side and through all kinds of eyes. This, however, has not deterred me from jotting down a few observations and experiences of my own, hoping that in them my readers may feel some rays of the Orient sunshine and beauty.

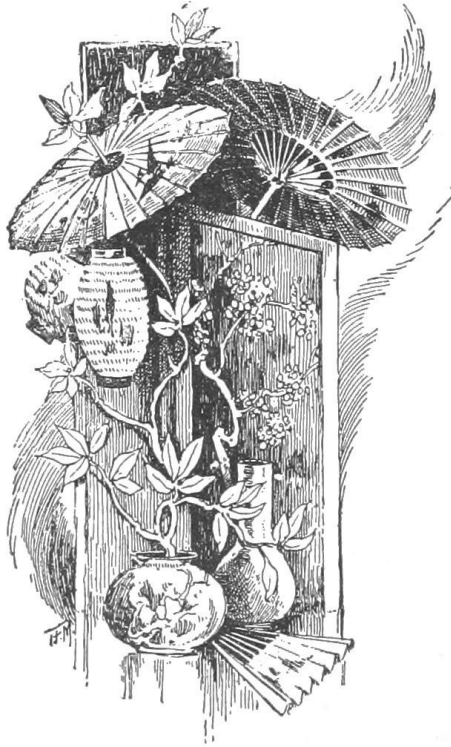
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## FOREIGN RESIDENTS.

**Y**OUR visit to Japan is likely to be a succession of surprises. Our discovery of the country is so recent that the large amount of literature on the subject frequently fails to change your childhood impression of that distant land. European travellers often entertain us with their ideas of America as an uncultivated waste with an occasional hastily constructed town, in which the red man is still to be seen; and my notions of the land of the Mikado were somewhat similar. I could never think of the Orient without thinking of the mushroom hat; and for me Japan meant a succession of bamboo huts, almond-eyed men with long and low-hanging moustaches, an occasional china cup, and now and then a strangely decorated fan. I was not at all sure that it was a hospitable shore to visit; I

understood that heads were removed there upon the slightest provocation. My earliest knowledge was gained from the paper lanterns that were the delight of Fourth-of-July celebrations, and those remarkably adorned napkins familiar to patrons of church fairs. I was also frequently called upon to make Sunday-School contributions for the conversion of these abandoned souls, and have vivid recollections of listening to many addresses by daring spirits, who had actually returned from the dangerous soil. After such occasions as these, I always looked upon the principal occupation of the Japanese as the stoning of missionaries. As I grew older, I tried to educate myself into different ideas, but all the books that I read, and even an occasional Japanese friend that I made, did not succeed in doing away with my childish fancies.



And so, when I found myself sailing into the Port of Yokohama one bright April morning, the ideal Japan of years gone by was what was uppermost in my mind. At first I thought there must be some mistake, for there was nothing to be seen in this harbour to correspond with the strange delights of my dreams. Not a single one-storied, thatched house, such as used to grace the pages of my geography, was visible on the shore. Everything, as far as I could see, was the same as the entrance to an European seaport. The long array of wharves might perhaps be missing, but there was many a ship built on western lines, and occasionally a small steam-tug

went puffing by, the whistle blowing as naturally as in any western harbour. And, even as I looked beyond all this, towards the shore, there was no visible sign that I had reached Japan. "Those people who make pictures of Japanese life do not tell the truth," I thought to myself, completely bewildered. When I landed, I found large brick houses of a most occidental kind, and shops fitted out in the regular English style. Not only were the outward evidences of life most un-Japanese, but few of the people passing up and down the street had the almond eyes, the short, wiry hair, or the olive complexion that I had quitted America to see; and young nurse girls wheeled about little carriages containing the same kind of babies that I had left three thousand miles away. Children in little trim English clothes, with their little English bare legs, were walking about and occasionally disappearing behind English hedges into houses of a distinctly Queen Anne type.

While I was surveying all this with a startled air, I was delighted and relieved by the sight of several small Orientals who ran quickly up to the wharf, dragging behind them peculiar two-wheeled conveyances. Yes, after all, here was some indication of the thing for which I had been looking; these were men of Japan, it was true, but hardly the Japanese of whom I had dreamed. They seemed rather out of place in this European city, and did not assume an aggressive air at all, as they politely offered to carry us to the hotel in their strange vehicles.

The explanation of this state of affairs is, however, very satisfactory. When you reach Yokohama, you land at what is called the Settlement, which is the portion of the city set aside by the Government for the foreign residents. Japan itself is situated back of this, and there, if you jump again into your *jinrikisha* and take another ride, you will find that it is Japan indeed.

There is one great hotel at Yokohama,—a genuine European importation, with large parlours, reading and sitting rooms, electric lights and bells. Your *jinrikisha* man immediately takes it for granted that you wish to stop at the Grand Hotel, and without waiting for instructions, hurries you off to Ni-jiu-ban, as it is called in the vernacular. You will probably arrive during the season of travel, and so be enabled to see the house at its best. If one or two of the foreign ships are in the harbour, and the officers come ashore, a scene of unusual attractiveness is sure to follow. A military band plays during dinner, commonly discoursing the patriotic airs of the different nations, though a well-known western march is frequently interspersed. The rooms are trimmed with flowers; there are ladies in bright, pretty gowns, men in evening dress, and Japanese “boys” in blue tights, white coats, and stocking feet. The gathering is decidedly cosmopolitan. You can talk with an American on stocks, an Englishman on golf, a Frenchman on Panama, or a Russian on the Triple Alliance. If you only step out on the piazza and take a short stroll, you will have a fine opportunity to gratify your taste for contrast, for it will be stepping from the Occident to the Orient. Perhaps the moon is shining—and the moon seems to shine differently in Japan than at home. There, below you, lies the land you thought you were being cheated out of; there are the small one-storied houses, the narrow streets, all bathed in the silence that so well fits your mood. A few lights are blinking below, but for the most part you see only what the moonlight cares to reveal. Off in the harbour are large shadowy forms which you know are western vessels, and your spirit feels a touch of old-fashioned patriotism at the thought that one of them is flying the American flag. The sound of the music comes from the distance, and you know that the dancing has begun; but you care little at the present time for such occidental diversions.





In the morning the sun will probably be shining in a truly oriental way, and you think it might be well to take a drive. Probably the first thing you will see, will be a large number of young Japanese girls, apparently out for a walk. Though they are clad in their own native costumes and have a general appearance that is decidedly Japanese, there is yet an air about them suggestive of the West. You puzzle over the matter for some time, and at last, with a sudden burst of intelligence, exclaim: "A boarding-school." And you are right; these young girls are being trained in the usages of the best English society, and have begun to dabble in French and algebra in a true boarding-school style. As they pass you by and you go on, you will see many small children attended by Japanese *amahs*, and baby carriages meet you everywhere. There are also a

few shops scattered around, and looking to the left you will see the British flag waving above the marine hospital. A little further on, your heart gives a bound, for you see the stars and stripes waving in the breeze, and you think that being an American is not so bad after all, whatever the foreigner may say of our confusion of “baggage” and “luggage” and our use of ice-water at dinner. It is the American hospital, a large, old-fashioned building, comfortable and home-like, with a garden filled with flowers and tropical plants. You can look from here into the bay, and the ship so dimly perceived the night before, you see is the “Baltimore.” You keep in the road, pass more Queen Anne houses and pretty green hedges, and an occasional bungalow; and further on you meet a park that has been laid out by the foreigners. Here are more baby carriages and bare legged children, and several prettily arranged tennis courts in which the players are enjoying themselves in a genuine English way.

It is probably a holiday, and the people will soon turn out for a celebration. It is hard to find a day in Japan that is not a holiday. It is well to know this before you visit the country, or you will be very much inconvenienced. You will be likely to visit the bank, and be much surprised to find it closed. “Why?” you will ask a friend, and he will answer: “It is a holiday.” And what is the day celebrated? Perhaps the fall of the Bastille; perhaps the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot; perhaps Washington’s birthday, the Fourth of July, or one of the innumerable sacred days of the Japanese. The trouble is that there are so many different nationalities in Japan, each demanding that certain events be respectfully observed, that only on about one-third of the calendar days can business be transacted. It is a country of a perennial holiday. There are a great many ways in which properly to observe these occasions, and a

large number of entertainments are arranged. If you wish, you can attend the theatre,—not the anciently-established institution of the country, but a genuine play, such as you sometimes see in the Occident. I qualify the statement because I think it seldom that you will permit yourself to attend such execrable performances at home as draw crowded houses of intelligent people at Yokohama. They are given by strolling players on their way around the world, who stop at the principal Japanese cities and foist their wares upon a diversion-craving public. They entertain you with the misfortune of the “Forsaken Leah,” the mistakes and unavailing repentance of “Bob Briley,” the “Ticket-of-leave-man,” or you may have the opportunity of weeping through five acts of “East Lynne,” or “The Elopement.” A minstrel show has been known to come ashore, and an exhibition of French marionettes is no uncommon sight.

Perhaps your nature requires a different kind of excitement; if so, you may attend the races. These are carried on in the true English style, and are very generously patronised. The occasions are holidays in themselves, and offer a sufficient excuse for the closing of the banks and stores. A race track has been laid out back of the residence portion of the city, and has an additional attractiveness in the fact that it commands an excellent view of the elusive Fuji. Foreigners turn out in full force, many coming down from Tokio. Often the Mikado honours the affair with his presence; he is always an interesting addition to any event, but he is an inconvenient person to have around, owing to a peculiar phase of Japanese veneration. No one may hold his head higher than the Mikado, else his sacredness would be outraged; and the many attempts to make him tower above the rest of the populace frequently produce amusing complications. Such a predicament happened a short time ago, when the Mikado was on his way to the

racers. An American with more curiosity than knowledge of Japanese religious rites, thought it a fine opportunity to catch a glimpse of the royal person, and so elevated himself upon a box near by and awaited the procession. He had stood there some time, flattering himself upon the difference between American and Oriental intelligence, when his peace of mind was suddenly disturbed by a series of shouts, which, he divined from the gesticulations, were directed towards himself. The constant motions to descend he regarded with a true Yankee stoicism, and it was not until the box was pulled from beneath his feet, that he was induced to pay the proper respect to the Majesty of Japan. The races themselves, with the little shaggy horses, have proved to be a very fertile means of entertainment. The riding is done to a considerable extent by the little Japs, who take to it quite readily, and make very acceptable jockeys.



“The dainty *kimono*-clad forms.”

One of the most delightful events in the social life of the foreign residents of Yokohama is Regatta Day. All their pent-up enthusiasm seems to let itself out, and the numerous visiting vessels contribute to a most entertaining scene. The contests take place in the spring, and preparations are made many days in advance. The vessels in the harbour are gayly decorated with flags and streamers; the wealthier classes turn out in their carriages, and the Bund is one mass of ladies and children in white dresses, intermingled by the dainty *kimono*-clad form of the Japanese. The

hotel is impartially adorned with the colours of every nation, and the piazza is a varied scene of moving gayety. Every one does not attend the races behind the bluff, but Regatta Day is the one event of the season, and furnishes an excuse for considerably more than the nautical contests. The races themselves are perhaps not of sufficient importance to justify all this excitement, but Yokohama is very different from New York harbour. The day is bound to be clear, the sky is always of Italian deepness, and the sun never fails to shine down on the lively scene with a refreshing glow.

Domestic life in Japan has its inconveniences; but it has also its more advantageous side. Do you wish to live in splendid style on a small income? You should dwell in the land where servants cost only four dollars a month. The life of the foreign residents in Japan is somewhat mysterious; the position of the mistress of the household eluded my investigations for a long time. "What do you do?" was a question I asked many of the ladies, but never received a satisfactory reply. After much thought I have come to the conclusion that the only thing your position requires of you is to sit in your parlour and amuse yourself as best you may; and when you wish anything done, simply clap your hands and cry "Boy."

This last word is the keynote to the situation. As soon as you have learned the word "Boy," you have solved the whole problem of the European household in Japan. Everything centres around this important dignitary, whom even foreign innovation has not succeeded in abolishing. The "Boy" has edged his way into every foreign home in Japan, and his position is as firmly established as the homes themselves. He is one of the most indispensable domestic functionaries that have figured in history. But, in the first place, an excusable mistake must be corrected. The "Boy" is not a boy at all, but is simply called so in deference to custom. Most of

the “Boys” have large families of their own, and I have seen many with white hair and wrinkled faces. He never seems to resent this youthful title, and would feel very much bewildered should you suddenly begin to call him “Man.” He appreciates his important position very keenly; he is no ordinary servant, but a man with thoughts of his own and the dignity of a household resting upon his shoulders.

The whole thing is managed somewhat after this style: You receive an intimation that a few friends will dine with you, and this intimation is all about which you need trouble yourself. You never begin to think what you have to offer your guests, for you are not supposed to know anything about such things. You simply sit down, clap your hands and shout “Boy!” In a few moments the door will open and the person who bears this title presents himself. He approaches, bows lowly, and makes a single ejaculation,—

“Heh!”

This simply means that he is all attention. If you are inexperienced, you will get the idea that this word means “yes.” But you will have many opportunities later to correct your mistake. The Japanese says “Heh!” to signify that he is listening, and there his responsibility ends. He never commits himself.

“I am going to have two friends to dinner,” you reply, and you give their names.

“Heh!”

He bows again, turns around, and leaves the room. That is all you have to do until the dinner hour arrives. Never make any suggestions; the “Boy” would be completely mystified by such a

proceeding. The way he goes about everything is very picturesque. You understand that the man who has just made his exit is the head “Boy” or No. 1 “Boy.” He goes downstairs and begins to examine the possibilities for the dinner. Very likely he finds something lacking. If so, he immediately makes a call on No. 1 “Boy” next door, and returns with the supplementary dish needed to make the dinner a success. There exists a kind of free-masonry among the “Boys,” and what one cannot find in his own domain he feels no hesitation in borrowing from a friend near by. Your “Boy” then visits the “Boys” of the friends who are to dine with you and makes many interesting inquiries. He asks what their favourite wines are, and never hesitates to request a loan of their plate and linen. He usually also demands the cooks of your friends, and leads them off to your house in order that the dinner may be more satisfactorily prepared. Thus it happens that when your friends arrive they are very likely to eat your dinner cooked by their own servants and to see their own china and linen gracing your table. More than this, the “Boys” of your friends are usually present and attend to their wants. The order of things will be reversed when you dine out.

You see this “Boy” is a very convenient and important person, and as he is usually an intelligent man, everything goes smoothly on. Occasionally a difficulty arises owing to the fact that he has not a sufficient regard for the mistress of the house, and indeed it is a question whether he ever looks upon her as such. Japan has not yet learned to rate women at their true worth, and it is this sentiment that is at the bottom of the “Boy’s” reluctance to take orders from anyone but a man. Most of them are gradually coming around and will obey you, but a few conservative souls still remain. I had a friend who possessed a very worthy “Boy,” whose character was



blemished by this one defect. She told him one day to remove a plant into an adjoining room. He bowed, said "Heh!" and departed. Some hours passed, and the plant was still unmoved. He was called in again, again he bowed, ejaculated the usual "Heh!" and left the room. My friend tried this several times, and succeeded in getting more bows and more "Hehs!" but the plant remained where it had been. She spoke to her husband about the matter, who called in the "Boy" and told him to remove the object of the dispute. The "Boy" bowed, said "Heh!" took the plant and carried it into an adjoining room. When asked to explain his previous disobedience, he said: "I will do it if master wishes it, heh!" and with a profound obeisance he retired.

Another great enemy to domestic life is what is known as the "squeeze." This is not peculiar to the household, but is found in every part of the Japanese social system. The whole business of the country is run on a commission. Every time you buy anything, you have to pay several "squeezes," or commissions, to the various people concerned in the transaction. No "Boy" will run an errand without his "squeeze," and he uses a great deal of liberty in your domestic accounts. Should you send him out to buy a bouquet of flowers, he would always charge you as well as the florist a "squeeze" in the reckoning. The butcher who deals with you has to pay him a certain amount, and of course you are the one who suffers in the end. This is altogether independent of the profit of the goods, and often is little more than a personal consideration. Foreigners have made war many times against the "squeeze," but their efforts have been unsuccessful. It seems to be a second nature with the Japanese; it is one of those good old customs that they will not let die. I had an iconoclastic friend who resolved that there should be no "squeezes" to impede her domestic calculations, and

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