

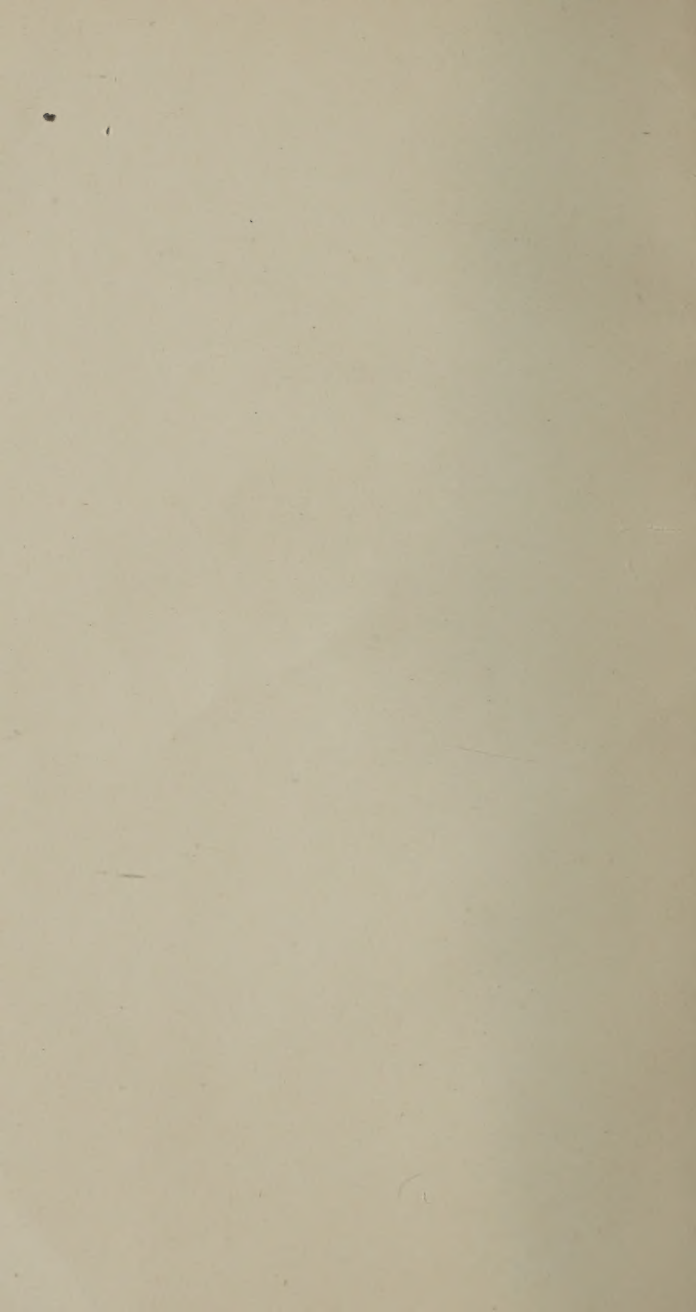


Dr. Darwin's Journal

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# IN DARKEST TOKYO.

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SKETCHES OF HUMBLE LIFE IN THE  
CAPITAL OF JAPAN

BY

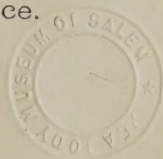
MATSUBARA IWAGORO.

TRANSLATED

AT

The "Eastern World" Office.

EDITED BY F. SCHROEDER.



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YOKOHAMA, 1897.

THE "EASTERN WORLD" NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHING  
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## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The chapters of this work that have already appeared in the *Kokumin Shimbun* have been very favorably commented upon, and the most important ones have been selected and embodied in this work with other new matter, to throw light on the life of the poor upon such questions as: What is darkest Tokyo; what is life in the restaurants of the poor, the *kichin yado*; what refuse is sold at the rice shops of the poor; where are the clubs of the poor; what does hunger teach; what economies are practiced in the homes of hunger and cold; why and how do the poor become poor, what is the circulation of money amongst them? Then, what it is you know about pawn brokers in the streets of the poor; at what period do a child and a cat become one's fortune; where does the street lead to which you are entering with me; why do copper coins have wings? What does it mean to eat without work, what shall be valued more, gold or waste paper; what becomes of decrepit worn-out *jinrikisha* pullers, what are the features of this struggle for life; where is the line at which the lower orders will "vomit fire;" what do *jinrikisha* pullers eat; who are the principal customers in low eating and drinking houses; what is the

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condition of the maid servants employed in eating and drinking houses; what account books do labourers keep; what are the numbers of day labourers, how do the married and the single live; what is sold by vendors who are out all night on the roadside; how is business carried on in auction rooms, in the early morning markets, and in the markets where the *bunkiu sen* is the principal coin.

Those who desire an answer to those questions will find them in "DARKEST TOKYO." The book is the examining judge in the world of poverty, it is the attorney for the houses of hunger and cold. It is the microscope that lays bare the microcosm of humble life, it is the telescope that shows us its farthestmost limits.

THE AUTHOR.

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### The Editor's Preface.

The story of life "IN DARKEST TOKYO" by Mr. Matsubara Iwagoro, a translation of which has appeared in the columns of the "EASTERN WORLD" has been so favorably received, and, as a record of humble life of the time in which it was written, is of so much permanent interest, that its preservation in the more lasting form of a book seemed desirable. I have therefore published an edition of two hundred copies of it which will be for sale at the "EASTERN WORLD" office, and at the offices of Messrs. Kelly & Walsh, Ltd. Yokohama.

A prolonged residence in Tokyo has made me familiar with the ground on which the author gathered the experiences laid down in his work, which was published in Japanese, and a knowledge of the language, acquired during a residence of over sixteen years in Japan in which various exigencies brought me into contact with all classes of the population, from the Minister of State down to the humblest coolie, has given me many opportunities to learn the ways and habits of the people. I have therefore here and there rounded off a sentence, added a touch of colour, or followed up a course of ideas suggested by the author, but on the whole I have adhered as closely as possible to the original text.

F. SCHROEDER,  
Editor "EASTERN WORLD."

December 1896.





## IN DARKEST TOKYO.

**H**OW to live is the great question, both kings, princes and beggars have to get money, and how the latter do so, how they find food, how they rejoice, how they grieve, how they take their ease, how they suffer, what they hope, what reduces them to despair, all this I have experienced. I became poor one morning and entered the dark homes of cold and hunger in the evening, remaining in them for more than five hundred days, seeing them in endless varieties, and learning a thousand things that only the poor do learn, and all there is to be learned in the life of the poor has been engraved on my memory and related in this book, whose contents, I trust, will appeal to the benevolent.

Some time back, it does not matter when, I met with some friends at dinner, and the conversation accidentally turned upon beggars in London, upon strikes in England, communist and anarchists in Germany and Russia, and we discussed the conditions and causes that had called them into existence. It was a prosperous year, there had been abundant harvests, yet prices were high, and the poor cried that they were hungry, reports of deaths from starvation even were heard in every quarter.

On the other side of the dividing line there were banquets without any special object, entertainments, by day and by night, sounds of merriment, and the rush of life filled the streets of the capital. Society, of which until then I had taken no special notice then suddenly became an object of interest to me. But would one be able to solve its riddles simply from reading books, I asked myself. I kept my thoughts from my companions, and resolved within myself to throw light upon the dark cheerless lives of the poor, to show how they lived, in detail. I threw myself into the homes of hunger and discomfort, without any help on the journey, to learn such lessons as poverty could teach to me, who had been a student, to store up the wisdom that poverty gives, to see my own life in its light, and not to benefit from its lessons only for a time. I meant to cast in my lot with poverty and distress for a lengthened period, with no more than the clothes on my back.

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It was the end of September, the sun was still hot, and its fierce rays beat on the white streets, the dust thrown up by horses and carriages rose in thick clouds, and the water carts that were dragged a long the streets by weary, panting men failed to lay it. Some beggars were standing under the eaves of a low house, eating melons and egg plants that had been left by market people; others were allaying their hunger with raw peaches that had been given to them. A big heap of those peaches would cost half a cent. Others again eagerly picked up spoiled rice and remnants of fish from garbage heaps. I was as poor as they were, only my clothes were not as worn and dirty as theirs, but I had camped out in

the fields and was as hungry and thirsty as they were. The policeman on the wayside would have called me a *tachimbo* (vagrant). I got some spoiled plums with which I filled my pockets and went to the Yanaka cemetery where a number of beggars had congregated. Some looked at me with envious eyes as I ate my plums, and others eyed me in a doubtful way, but withal they showed that they considered me as a companion in poverty. I ate beggars' rice and I was to live in a beggar's home. Thus began my first day in the university of poverty.

#### A NIGHT SCENE IN POVERTY STREET.

The sun had set, I was about to enter the realm of darkness and distress. Slowly I descended Uyeno hill, the look had come upon me of one who has no business in the world. A long row of brown cottages extended from east to west, and some in transverse lines from north to south. A graveyard was the boundary on the left. Poverty had its end in sight and yet it struggled on with the strong love of life that is common to all. Here was Poverty's home, in the fifteen districts of Shitaya. Strange looking people came home from their work in the great city, some carried pick axes on their shoulders, some little lunch boxes, which, light as they were, their hands were too tired to hold, on their back. Their clothes were soiled with sweat from the heat of the day and worn through with carrying poles. There were coolies who earn 18 cents a day, hurrying home for their modest supper. A husband and wife with a weazened child, whose nakedness was only covered with a small towel wound around the loins, wearily trudged along looking for a resting place for

the night. Two girls of twelve or thirteen years of age came along, sisters probably. One carried a samisen, the other a fan. They were counting the small coins that had been given to them during the day. In days to come their small bronzed hands might become very dainty and white, wear rare gems, and hold the tangled webs of threads that reach far over the sea. Who knows, such things have been, and may be again. At present the horizon of the little maids is the rim of a small copper coin. An infirm old mender of pipes comes tottering after them. He is followed by a mender of clogs; next comes an *ameyah*, the favourite of the children who makes such wonderful things out of clear stiff barely paste; women who buy empty bottles discuss their bargains and the vicissitudes of their business keeping up a lively conversation. A crack in a bottle that is noticed too late, means the same to them what the loss of a ship means to the millionaire ship-owner, and more perhaps, for their loss cannot be covered by insurance.

Here come wayside pedlars who have left off business for the night; some boys with wooden masks who dance on the streets, accompanied by their masters, are eating roasted corn and fish. They are almost too tired to walk, and, indeed, more than once they stumble over their own feet.

But business in Poverty street is not yet finished, most of it indeed is only beginning. The curbstone merchants begin to spread out their wares, vegetables and fruits of all kinds, salt salmon, dried cuttlefish, dried codfish, mackerels etc., all of a quality to suit their customers' pockets. But there is an innate taste in the arrangement of them that



makes them look very tempting, and there is much bargaining by economic housewives until the dealer makes a small reduction, a very small reduction, for the fraction of cent, or an extra potato, is sufficient to turn the scale. But he makes such a realistic pretence of throwing his goods away that the good wife makes haste to secure her bargain lest he should change his mind. To be sure, she goes through the same performance every day, but, to her, the fraction of a cent, the extra potato is an equally serious matter every day. The lives of the poor are made up of trifles, but to the poor they are not trifles.

On the other side of the street there is a store where all manner of pickled things are sold, and the owner of the store is one of the capitalists of his quarter. There is *takuwan*, that is pickled *daikon*, that is served cut up in thin slices, *okoku*, the same vegetable, shred, and one of the staple relishes of the poor, pickled plums, quite a heap of which can be had for one cent, and lots of other good things, of which good children who view them with longing eyes must not eat too much lest something dreadful happen to them. The little heretics do not believe all the stories that are told them on such occasions, but Japanese "home rule" does not permit them to express any doubt or to ask forward questions, and it is a poor house in which the little ones do not get enough to eat of what humble fare there is, even if their parents have to stint themselves. Next door there is a saké shop with which a restaurant is combined. What savoury odours it exhales. One can tell there is roast fowl, cuttlefish and fresh corn. Quite a crowd of people stand within its tempting

vicinity. There are the desire of the moment, and the necessities of the far, far off to-morrow that may never come. For the poor are not always sick for a long time, they lay themselves down at night, some to sleep and some to die. The small coin that is turned over and over again is at last conquered by another whiff of inviting smells of good hot food that assails the nostrils of hungry wayfarers with irresistible force and the longdrawn *hai-i* of the breathless waiting maid, who is for ever on the trot during the busy hours of the early night, announces the fact that another order has been given. Who could hesitate? There may be a dull day to-morrow, but the sun will shine again some day. Miserable poor, happy poor! But Poverty street has many needs, and there are many stores in it. Here we have an old clog store, and if old clogs were diamonds the purchasers could not scrutinize them more carefully, for what a flaw in a diamond is to a dealer in precious stones, some cleverly hidden defect in an old pair of clogs is to the purchaser of the latter article. There are tricks of trade in every trade and the old clog trade has its full share of them. Listen to the explanations, view the well feigned wonder with which the old dealer meets the remonstrations of the good housewife who just returns a pair which she only bought the night before. They were guaranteed for at least three or four months, and yet at the first few steps she made with them the *huna* (toe-strap) of one them broke, which was ill luck, moreover, and the other seemed to be on the point of giving way. Deceit, shameless deceit, and everything was so dear. What a world it was. There is an old furniture store also, a second hand clothes store, and all

of them were doing business. They had not what Poverty street really wanted, if it could have had its way, but they had what Poverty street could afford to buy.

A fish dealer was busy cutting up shark and tunny fish, *huri* and bonito, and long practice made him cut very even portions. Any two of them would scarcely have differed a *momme* in weight. Near him a woman was cooking crabs, and a small boy was counting out shrimps, calling out his count in a peculiar singing voice. There was quite a throng of eager purchasers, Poverty street must have been in luck that night. Some, to be sure, were only buying parts of the entrails of the large fish, for in Poverty street much that is thrown away elsewhere has a market value; others who could afford the luxury, were buying small slices for *sashimi*\* There were quite a crowd too who, from choice or necessity, merely looked on, so that the strange scene that unrolled itself before me was full of animation and interest.

Candles and lamps were lit, coming out like the stars, one after the other, and from some star, whose rays light up the sky, beings of another order, but with the same joys and sorrows as the restless throng in Poverty street might look down upon the star we call the world. Labourers throng the saké shops where there is a tempting array of saké tubs, full of promises of happiness that are never kept, and these poor people know it. They drink, but, excepting rare instances, they do not get drunk. Who would be-

\* Raw fish eaten with soy and horse radish, and a very tasty dish indeed, if properly prepared, although some foreigners do not like it.

grudge them the modest dissipation in which they indulge after a day's hard work, the brief hour of recreation that separates one day's toil from that of the next. Some also repair to the *yosé*, (story teller's entertainments). Truly, some great fun must be going on there, just listen to the voice of that story teller, listen how the people laugh, it does one good to hear them, and yet how the sound grates on sorrow-laden souls, staggering by under the burden of life, almost too heavy to bear. Some throw it off, two or three lines in a police report are their epitaph. But, after all, it is not everybody who can spare three or four cents for an hour of two of merriment, and then there are the little cushion and the small brazier with its cheerful gleam, so that the expenses mostly mount up to ten cents, and ten cents will buy many useful things in the small coin of the poor. I, the new student at the university of poverty, passed by, therefore. A smoke-begrimed lantern loomed up in the darkness before me, it was the sign of poverty's hotel, the *kichin yado*, where the homeless of both sexes crowd together at nights. It was to be my abode this night, for I, like the company gathered there, had no other. I meant to study it, its rules, its laws, and its etiquette. For as there are rules, laws and etiquette for those born in purple and fine linen, so there are for those born in rags. What they were I had yet to learn.

#### THE KICHIN YADO.

I cross the threshold of a new and strange life. The semi-darkness at first shows a confused mass of furniture, household utensils, bundles and other things, belonging to the house or the guests. There is a very much mixed company. There are traveling

pedlars, small traders, performers of amusing tricks, priests, pilgrims and a number of people who may have been everything and anything, and who are ready to again be anything and everything that promises them a day's respite from the wolf at the door. What strange lives many of them must have led, what strange experiences theirs must have been on the weary journey from which they now sought a brief rest at the *kichin yado*. How near the end might be to some of them; how many of them would end their life that very night were they not buoyed up by the hope of brighter days coming. How light again would be the hearts of others could they but see the bright smiles of fortune that is hastening towards them through the gloom with winged feet. In the morning perhaps the fair goddess would knock at the door, and whomsoever she beckoned would step out of the darkness into the light. Ah, how many into whose ear she breathes the story of the new life, become deaf, utterly deaf to the cry of distress, for the golden gates of the new life, that hungry eyes may not even look upon, bar out hunger and thirst, suffering and cold, yea, even the memory of it.

What stories some of these travellers might tell, stories of love, of hatred, of heroic suffering for the sake of others, and also of vice and wanton crime. The gay capital that has attracted them affords a wide field for either. What a curious medley of luggage these people carry with them to ply, and, some of them perhaps, to conceal their trade. There were boxes of various goods belonging to travelling business men, long-handled umbrellas under which to display their goods on quickly improvised stands, whence the glib tongued vendors would proclaim

their excellent quality to wondering audiences ; tents and poles that were the property of strolling performers ; the peculiar boxes which pilgrims to the twenty-four famous places of worship carry on their backs, and in which they keep their beads and bells, and other articles used on the journey. How soon those pilgrimages, those long lazy rambles that are both justified and sanctified by the pious object in view will become a thing of the past, alas ! with much else of old Japan that is fast fading from our view, with much to which the old cling with trembling hands, and which impetuous youth in the rush for some scarcely understood goal ruthlessly tramples under foot. In a corner lean long pilgrims' staves with metal rings, staves without rings, lie around straw sandals and socks, worn out on hard pitiless roads during the long journey, and their number shows that the house is crowded.

I have paid 3 cents for my night's lodging in advance and have put my clogs under the veranda after tying them together with a string of tough paper, in obedience to a warning by the landlord written on a placard on the wall. In the hotels of the rich you may lose a wife, a fortune, honour, a good name ; in the hotels of the poor you cannot lose much more than a pair of old clogs, and you are enjoined in large letters to take care of them. There were three rooms of together about 20 mats (a mat is  $3 \times 6$  feet square) which were divided by paper sliding doors, for the poor have no secrets, and to some extent impending vulgarity controls or threatens intended vulgarity. The sliding doors were open, and from a post in the middle a solitary lamp shed its feeble light. Some five six of the guests had taken up corner lots. They

had come in good time and preempted those choice locations which correspond to the front rooms on the first floor of a first class hotel ; others were stretching their weary limbs and were enjoying the luxury of a pipe of tobacco and a roof over their heads. A man of aristocratic tendencies who had perhaps seen better days was sitting under the lamp and shaving himself. I meant to observe, but I was not courting observation and slunk into a dark corner therefore, where there was a pile of bedding, which however, offended the sense of smell. An old *ameyah*, had already settled there who, on his part, was anything but a bundle of sweetness. It seemed that he had to support a large population upon which he waged such vigorous war, that I looked for an opening to get into a more congenial neighbourhood. The place began to fill, people coming in fours and fives, the drift-wood of the great city. Some looked like coolies, and were clad only in a single nondescript garment. Then came an old jinrikisha puller, and an interant mender of umbrellas who had his wife with him and a child of about four years of age. The woman seemed to have much experience in "Poverty Hall" and with the world that moved in it. Her homely face beamed with good nature and as she entered she merrily exclaimed to her child "O, look, there are a great many uncles." What a delicate womanly way that was to bespeak the favour of the rough company for her poor little waif. The child's eyes brightened, it showed that the appeal to the "uncles" had been made before, and that it had not been made in vain. The woman sat down near me with a polite "good evening" to me and the small knot of wayfarers with me. Her complexion was dark, her nose flat and

her teeth were blackened, but there was such a kind way about her, and such an evident disposition to call the whole world kin that it went straight to my heart. A young man who looked like a coolie was awkwardly trying to mend a torn sleeve in his shirt, but needles are so small, and so difficult to hold that he had made but poor progress. As soon as she saw it she snatched the poor garment from his hands and in a few minutes had it neatly repaired. The young man gave her a thousand thanks, and the thoughtful look that came over his face seemed to show that the kind act of the strange poor woman had conjured up before his mind's a vision of a bright-eyed, soft-voiced helpful little wife in a home of his own. Such trifles as these, momentary impressions, light as snowflakes, sometimes change the whole current of a man's life. No record is left of them, but in after years, in the dim twilight of life, soon to merge into night, eternal or not, who knows, their memory comes back, borne on the noiseless wings of the nightbreeze, and with a sigh one wishes that one might say the hasty word of thanks that was said in the past once more, once more before it gets dark.

To this woman, I thought, the *kichin yado* had become a home, and she seemed to feel at home and comfortable in it. If by some chance, and the life of the poor is full of chance, she should commit a fault and be put into prison, she would be "as kind as an aunt" to the prisoners. Ah, if the world were but honest enough to own it, the slender fingers, the weak, hands of good women keep more men from crime and out of prison than the powerful arm of the law with all its codes and creaking machinery.

In the meantime the child, which she had fondled



in her arms, began to go around to make acquaintances and friends. After a while a number of people came in, and then the landlady entered to spread the bedding for her guests. The latter all got up and helped her in her work, for the hotels of the poor keep but few servants. I thought we would feel very much crowded if one person was to occupy one mat, but it was worse than that, about ten persons or more were crowded under one mosquito net. How could people endure it? The sultry air was filled with nauseous odours from the bodies of the coolies, so that one could scarcely breathe. The fleas came charging in legions, the mosquitoes got through the rents of the net, and there was the fear of worse vermin. To be sure, I was there of my own free will, I had cast in my lot with the poor, I had expected hardship and felt myself strong enough to brave any fate, but now an insect crawled over me and it made me shudder. I had deceived myself, I had overrated my strength. One may think and talk of becoming a nurse even of leprous beggars, but it is hard to do it. It is hard even to sit down with a vermin infested beggar.

Under the circumstances there was but little prospect of rest, but I laid down as the others did and fought the armies of mosquitoes and other insects that assailed me as best I could. I sat up and laid down again times out of number, whilst the habitués of the place snored in blissful forgetfulness of their miserable surroundings. To me sleep was impossible, weary as I was, and at last the dim light of dawn announced another day. I got up to wash my face, but an old rusty tin comprised the entire toilet set, and beside a closet stood a pail of warm, impure looking water. I could not use that. The rich sometimes

call the poor dirty and very often with good reason, but they forget that cleanliness with the very poor is a luxury that they cannot afford. In the breathless haste for the daily measure of cheap rice there is not much time left for cleanliness, and there must be conveniences for cleanliness, let them be ever so modest, and they cost money. What they are in a *kichin yado* I have just shown. As soon as the front door was opened, therefore, I rushed out into the fresh air and made for the first water tap. The rush of the clean cool water over my head drove away the foul shadows of the night that still hunted my heated brain. The wind and sun were my towel. I had seen poverty "at home." I had come to do so, but I was weak enough to say to myself that I would not do so again. The one night in a *kichin yado* was enough for me, and yet there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, to whom it was a home every night, with its vermin, stench and danger of infection. I would make my bed in the fields henceforth. I could not imagine why the coolies whose arms and bodies were strong as steel would suffer all that and pay for it when kind nature offers soft, cool, wide beds free of charge. It is pleasant to rest in the fields at night and to look up to the silent stars as they swing across the sky in their orbits, it affords food for reflection to a thoughtful mind. There are the great brilliant planets, the sovereigns of the starry world with their court of lesser lights, at a distances that ever remain the same, there are the thousands of small stars decreasing in power and size untill they lose themselves in the nebulae of the milky way. What a faithful picture the makrokosm of the heavens is of the microcosm of this world. Once in a while some blazing comet

flashes across the sky, inspiring awe and wonder, once in a while some human meteor rises from obscurity and fascinates the gaze of the world, and again dipping under the horizon both leave things as they were. The curves and angles of the borders of countries may change, but the same loves and passions, the same hatreds and aversions are called into action by the mysterious chemistry of the human mind, as the laws of inorganic nature compel the same substances for ever to assume the same crystalline forms. Millions of eyes before us have gazed upon the same stars, and closed with the same weary sigh, millions of eyes after us will look up to them with the same longing for a little happiness, a little peace, a little rest from the turmoil of life, but it will only come when the stars fade for ever from their dim sight. Looking upon the eternity of the heavens the question arises: Is life worth living, what if I, if all mankind had never lived, never rejoiced, never suffered? But death is decay, the powers that move the world must be active, their activity must have an object, and that object is life, life, not as we who have no control over those powers would wish it to be, but life as it is, life as perhaps it must be, and the realities of which recalled me from my mute converse with other worlds. The grass on which I lay afforded a soft carpet but the dew of the night had moistened it, to give it life and strength for the heat of the day. It is suffering to lie down with a crowd on a hot sultry night, but worn out human nature can bear it, and the voices of the night in the field whisper a thousand things which none but the savage can understand, and one can not bear it long to be alone between heaven and earth with only the stars for companions. One longs for

the sound of the human voice. It is not pleasant to be attacked by armies of mosquitoes and other insects, but in the fields there are snakes, frogs and noisome toads which one must accept as bed fellows. Thinking of these things it seemed to me that the *kichin yado*, after all, was a better place to sleep in for coolies, vagrants and other poor single people. They do not mind the sultriness and bad odours. The one crowded room that scarcely gives one mat to one person, the crowding of ten persons under one broken mosquito net, are to them a balcony built of precious stones with all its comforts. There they lie down therefore and think that the luxury will enable them to live a hundred years. So their poor bedding does them the same service as silk quilts do to the rich. But let us ascend a step, theoretically at least, whether in practice the following chapter will enable you to judge.

#### DWELLINGS AND FURNITURE OF THE POOR.

Turning over in my mind the momentous question whether I should make my home in the fields or in a *kichin yado*, or elsewhere, I went from place to place and from corner to corner, picking up the wisdom of the streets as I went along, and I can tell you that the streets have arts and fine arts of which I had no idea the day before. There were curious natural products, and wonderful things made by hand. Do not laugh at me, I entreat you. Poverty is a very serious thing. There is not much difference between the grand entertainment at the Rokumei-kwan and the modest meal in the homes of the poor, it is the same event in human life and a good meal in the latter is certainly a greater festival to those who sit down to it than any big dinner at the former to guests of the state. But how do the poor live, what are

their homes, their furniture, their clothes, their food? From ancient times down to this day no artist ever drew or designed their furniture, nor has any writer described it in a book. There are various public exhibitions, fine art exhibitions, and competitive exhibitions all over the world, but in none of them have ever been shown the homes of the poor. There are famous painters who paint the picture of a princess playing Koto, nobles at a banquet, sweet flowers and love birds, bold mountains, silvery streams, but no painter's brush ever delineated the homes and belongings of the poor. There are writers who describe how some great man takes his bath, the pomp at the marriage of some fine lady, or a famous battle, but none of them have become the chroniclers of the lives of the poor. But I have seen what one does not see in public exhibitions, I have seen what artists have not painted and what writers of stories have not written about. What I have seen belongs to a special class of its own, the sights I saw and the sounds I heard were all new to my eyes and ears. I was like a baptism of the senses with new and strange things, this life in the homes of the poor.

#### THE HOUSES OF THE POOR.

A few thin boards, enclosing a space that no one particularly wants, having a frontage of about nine feet, comprise the houses of the poor. The boards are old and broken, the floors low, and the posts are scarcely strong enough to keep the houses from tumbling down, but somehow, like their inmates, they are so much crowded together that they keep up one another. The mats are broken, especially at the edges so that the straw protrudes in frayed tufts and on them a family of four five persons sit, sleep, eat

and drink and work. There is not much therefore, but there is always room enough for a little *Butsudan* (a little Buddha shrine) at which the family pray to Buddha, the mild god of the Far East, and to the gods of their fathers, who will hear them some day, some day when they will know why they have wept and suffered, when the roof over their heads will be eternal light.

You will almost think it superfluous for me to say anything about their furniture, but even such as it is it is more valuable to them than inlaid cabinets to the rich. The *hibachi* (firebox) has seen much service, it is battered and broken, so is the little iron kettle that is simmering on the tripod which is imbedded in the white ashes that are heaped about the little charcoal fire, so as to exclude all wasteful draught, for charcoal is dear and is getting dearer every day. The poor housewife could teach the chief engineer of a great ship of war lessons in the art of getting the greatest possible amount of heat or use, out of the smallest amount of fuel. She has studied in a harder school, dear reader, in a school from which one must graduate with honours or die, and whose honours even do not mean more than being able to live without begging or stealing. If you could but listen to the stories that the battered iron kettle tells to the old broken *hibachi*, and if you could but understand the language in which they tell them.

They have heard the wails of life struggling into existence, the merry laugh of children to whom the buzzing of a fly was a great joke that swept away their childish griefs; they have heard the sighs of a lonely wife and her tearful entreaties to a brutish

dissipated husband ; her brave words of comfort to a sick bread-winner ; the words of love and wisdom poured into impatient little ears ; brave plans for the time when the little ones would be old and strong enough to bear a part of the burden, and they have heard the moans of the dying. Many a hot tear has dried in the cold ashes of the *hibachi* and on its rickety frame, when there was no money to buy a little charcoal, when nothing was left but life, and a dull desire that the sun of another day might not light up its misery. But the stories that the old *hibachi* and the broken kettle tell to one another appeal to no publisher, they must be heard with the heart, and the world hears only with its ears.

But even a *hibachi*, old and rickety though it be, is an unattainable luxury at times and then any old pot or pan that has outlived its proper use takes its place, and the tattered paper umbrella, the old worn-out clogs complete the scenery.

The bedding is a mass of rags kept together one scarcely knows how, and when times are hard even that becomes a luxury. The law that governs the lives of the poor is want, their lives are made up of wants, few of which they can ever satisfy. Want ties their hands and fetters their legs, it weighs on their backs during the day and on their hearts in the night, it is the burden that makes all other burdens harder to bear. Yet some of their wants must be supplied, but how ? What a grand idea it is to pass pieces of rope through pieces of wood and make them serve for clogs, and how well it answers to paste strips of paper over a broken earthen pan so that it can be used again for boiling things in it. He who sees the marvels of sculpture created by

Mikaeru Anjiro or Hidari Jingoro unaffected, is ignorant of arts, but he who sees the rickety belongings of the poor and laughs at the infinite pains and ingenuity with which they are kept in repair is equally ignorant, and cruel in addition, for both have taken great trouble with their work, and the work of the latter is of more immediate and pressing importance, for if it is not done some one must suffer, another want would be added to the many already so bitterly felt. Money moves, but nowhere more so than in the houses of the poor, it does not stay with them. Money loves comfort and when it has got tired from running through the hovels of the poor, it takes its rest in the mansions of the rich, where it is at ease and may watch for opportunities to form connections, licit or illicit, no one will inquire, so that it but increase and multiply. Fine furniture, objects of art are piled up in the world, and any one willing and able to pay for them may take away as much he chuses. To the poor those things are as flowers seen in a looking glass, or as the moon reflected in water. The poor live in great cities filled to overflowing with good things, but for all the share they have in them they might as well live in a wilderness where no one lived but themselves. I am told that the fur boots which Lieut.-Col. Fukushima bought in Siberia are coarse and clumsy, and that, were any one to wear them on the streets in Tokyo, people would laugh at them. But these same boots were very necessary to him to travel through the plains of Mongolia where fuel and food are scarce, and where the people are not civilized yet. He should treasure them therefore as precious things, for they served him well through thousands of leagues.



For the same reason the broken tea pot and bowl of the poor are also precious things to them for they have travelled with them thousands of leagues through the wilderness of great cities where food is also scarce, and where even the rude hospitality of the savage is not known. The poor have drunk water from them and tears, and eaten rice from them also, they have been friends and old acquaintances to them when they had no others.

Have you ever known what it is to be alone in a great city with the criminal legend that you wanted to earn, not to beg or steal, your bread, stamped on your brow. If you have not, great suffering and bitterness has been spared you, but great mysteries have also remained unrevealed to you that none but the initiated may ever know, and that none may tell while they live. You have lived and died and come to life again, you do not again see things as others see them, that is if you differ at all from the beasts of the field.

#### BUSINESS AND LIFE IN POVERTY STREET.

Poverty street has its choice locations which are occupied by a plutocracy of its own that can afford a square foot or so more ground than it needs to turn around in, but the landlords take great care that no room is wasted. There are narrow lanes and alleys that have no outlet, and by the wayside stand closets, that have to serve several families, and vitiate the air. Why is this permitted? Because the landlord wants to build as many houses as he can on the ground he owns, and there is no one to say him nay. His houses are always let, and if one family moves out another is waiting to move in. The tenants are jinrikisha drawers, labourers of various kinds, rag men, waste paper dealers, pipe menders, hardware

menders, umbrella menders and menders of everything else, and there is a great deal of mending to be done in Poverty street. One half of the things it owns are always being mended, whilst the other half is on duty until its turn comes, which is as soon as the mended articles arrive. Then there are basket sellers, makers of cheap paper, for Poverty street has its manufacturers also, but most of its inhabitants live by mending things, and what cannot be mended there is of little use indeed. Nevertheless life in it is not all work. There are also *saémon katari* (perambulating storytellers), *tsuji gōshaku* (cross-road lecturers), who relate stories from the lives of celebrated persons by the wayside, puppet performers, and others of the same ilk, all of whom are called holiday workers. And all of them at some time or other pay tribute to the banker of the street, the money-lender (*hinashi*) who charges a very high interest and gets it. The loans must be returned to him in small daily instalments with the interest, and both the principal and the interest must be returned to him in a certain number of days. He runs no risks, and keeps his debtors in sight and in hand. It is only the rich who are given opportunities to defraud governments and people of millions, and who may then wash their hands in a bankruptcy court. The poor are born insolvent and die insolvent, yet, paradoxical as it may seem, they pay their way at every step they make and the sturdy spirit of honesty that governs Poverty street insists that they shall do so. If they cannot pay, Poverty street will help them to do so, but pay they must. Then there are lenders of bedding and clothes, and their business, if you have eyes to see and hearts that are more than a com-

plicated piece of mechanism in the human machinery, will give you a deeper insight into the heart and soul of Poverty street than any other business. I have already told you what sort of bedding the poor use and that to many even that is an unknown luxury, and when the old father, the old mother, or the the breadwinner of the family, is thrown down by sickness, another pityful little economy is made and a soft warm quilt is borrowed. A cent a day is the lowest rent for one quilt. Poverty street is also the home of the fortune teller, for it has a firm belief that better days must be coming, only it is so weary waiting for them that it would like to know *when*. One cent—the dollar of Poverty street—will lift the veil of the future, although the aristocracy of the profession charges as high as 50 cents. The rich make their fortune, the poor have it told. That is the difference.

Amongst the professional denizens of Poverty Street we also find *ku-isha*, moxa doctors, who apply little pads made of the dried leaves of a special herb, which are fixed to the skin and then ignited, the burns thus caused being supposed to cure various ailments, and one may often see the red marks on the backs and legs of people like rows of buttons. Poverty street cannot afford doctor's prescriptions, it drives out one pain with another. Then there are shampooers, and *majinai suru nito*, charm doctors, who have got quite an extensive practice, for with the poor the reality of life is so hard that they are very apt to believe in wonders. The charm doctor will write a mysterious character on an aching limb, pass a sacred writing over it, or mutter a spell, but sometimes a simple remedy is shrewdly applied in addition, and sparks

are struck from a flint at the same time, a practice which the translator has also noticed in the *yoshiwara*, where, after the nightly exhibition has opened, a servant goes around and strikes sparks from a flint over every *hibachi* to drive away evil influences. There are writers of signboards, travelling monks, to whom Poverty street, as poor as it is, affords hospitable treatment, and pilgrims to sacred places. The street also teems with small house industries, such as match-box and fan making, and others too numerous to mention.

I had to do something, but it was difficult to decide what. Some occupations would yield from 20 to 30 *sen* a day and others only 5 or 6 *sen*, so that I thought it would be best to go to an employment office in Asakusa.

#### THE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE.

At one of those offices in Abekawa-cho I was told that no one was wanted. Then I went to an office in Hanakawado, but only to receive the same reply. I tried another office in Umamichi next where I saw the master and asked him to give me a job as assistant with a party of rope dancers, but that application also failed. There was nothing to be done but to go back to the home of hunger and cold, the world of rags. I went back to Shitaya therefore and wearily tramped around the outskirts of the great city. At last I came to Samegahashi in the Yotsuya district, where the poorest of the poor live. There I heard of a man named Shimizu Yahei who, I was told, was a leading person in the neighbourhood. Mr. Shimizu was born in the country and had been a labourer himself. He was a generous, human man and was trusted by the poor, so that he had some

influence in the quarter. I did not know him before, but asked him to help me to get something to do. He said that was right, men should not eat without work, and young men should not be lazy. He got me employment in a rice shop where rice was sold that had been left over in the kitchens of large establishments. What do you think is the uttermost depth of poverty, is it hunger, cold, rags, tumble-down houses, or a wretched appearance? No, it is to be obliged to use the refuse of rice kitchens. The shop in which I was employed receded a little from the street, and in little front yard some five or six mats were spread upon which this refuse rice was dried again in the sun and again sold as *hoshii* (dried rice). The house was in keeping with the nature of the business. Its tottering sides were supported by props, the eaves were sodden and rotting, the roof was moss-grown so that it had all the sad picturesqueness of decay. There was an inner yard that occupied about two-thirds of the area of the house and which was littered with tubs, bottles, jars, pitchers, and anything that might serve to have refuse rice put into it, and everything was very dirty. The house was a veritable museum to me, as it contained so many things illustrative of how the poor live. I ought to have mentioned that although Mr. Shimizu did not know me, he treated me very kindly, as also did his good wife. When she took me to the rice shop she carried her baby on her back. On the way she asked me whether I could stand such work as that which awaited me, and advised me to be patient for two or three days anyhow. She also asked my employer to be patient with me. I had to go out at with two others at eight in the morning, at half past

twelve in the afternoon, and again at eight in the evening, drawing a cart called *dai hachi guruma* which was piled up with *teppo zaru*, that is big vessels bound around with bamboo, and with casks and tubs.

With this load of empty vessels we would go through the back entrance of the Military college and buy rice and other food that had been left over. The heaviest things that I had handled so far were chopsticks so that this sudden transition to hard work came very hard upon me at first. In addition I made as many mistakes as a child because I was new to the trade so that my master was not very well pleased with me, but having nothing better in view I thought it best to learn and endure, and after a time the neighbours came to call me *banto*. Our customers called this rice *heitai meshi* (soldier's rice) because we got it from the Military College. The price of one *zaru* (a vessel made of plaited bamboo) which contained 125 lbs. cost 50 cts., and we sold it to the poor at 6 or 7 *rin* (10 *rin*=1 cent) a pound. Anything else that was left over was given to us for nothing. The rice left over would fill from 3 to 6 *zaru*, and the other broken victuals such as *takuwan zuke* (sliced *daikon* preserved in salt and rice bran) and fragments of bread and fish, were put into the remaining vessels, so that our daily three voyages were as much as we could do. This refuse made no very tempting dishes, but to the poor people who bought it was as much of a luxury as bears' paws are to the rich, and as we returned, men and women, both old and young, provided with boxes and dishes, would be waiting and welcome us with the cry "There they come." It was their daily bread that came, and

it did not take much to buy it, less than a cent would buy a meal substantial enough to ward off the pangs of hunger. How much Cabinet Ministers and members of parliament might see and learn were they to see what is to be seen in Poverty street, were they to come face to face with the terrible enemies that have always to be fought at home, with this heart rending guerilla warfare for a meal in which a morsel more or less of fish, left over by those who fight the country's battles abroad, is an important consideration, a subject for argument, or a special favour.

When we came to the door of our Palace Hotel of Poverty a crowd would be already waiting there and as soon as the cart stopped at the door, boxes and bowls of all kinds were held out by eager hands with cries of "Please 2 *sen's* worth here, 3 *sen's* worth here, 8 pounds to me, 4 pounds to me, and so forth, all eagerly pushing, to the front rank to be served first. Fish and pickled or boiled vegetables are delivered in handfuls and fluids are measured out with little dippers, whilst rice is sold by weight, and when there is much pressure of business it is simply measured by eye sight. There is no menu, but poverty street has its humour and has given various names to the various eatables. Rice that has been scorched at the bottom of the kettle is called "tiger's skin" on account of its colour; fragments of bread are called *hetsui* (a small earthenware stove); rice washed out of the kettle is known as *arai* (wash), and remnants of certain vegetables as *kiri kabu* (stumps). All this refuse, however, is precious merchandise in the home of poverty and the quality is as seriously discussed as the rare and costly dishes at famous restaurants by the rich, of whom the proverb says

that they eat gems boiled over fires of precious wood.

As regards the poor this is practically true if you consider how dear charcoal, wood, and the food they use are. One or two cents will buy but very little, whilst those who buy in quantities get better value for their money and can also lay in a stock when prices are low. The poor, who have to buy for one or two cents at the time, therefore, buy gems indeed, and the charcoal and wood they use are precious fuel in fact. How could they keep on buying gems and precious wood then! Thus the rice and vegetables left over in large kitchens are as the gift of merciful goods to them to save them from destruction, and the shops where such things are sold all do thriving business.

Truly the right to live has to be dearly purchased. It is not a birth right. Every one who is born in these days is an unwelcome intruder who trespasses on some one else's ground, and it seems that war, pestilence and crime cannot make room enough for those whom imprudent nature thrusts into this merciless world, where disease, natural calamities, crime, and the greed of man, already lie in wait for them, to be roused into action by the first faint cry of life, to destroy them. Yet how much misery a little thought, a little kindly feeling might avert.

The story tells of a man named Echigo Denkichi who was employed by a large house of prostitution and who was so careful with wood charcoal, pickles, sugar, fish, etc., that he saved considerable money to his employers. Nothing was a trifle to him, and the house which had lost much money through carelessness in these matters so far, largely increased its wealth in three years because of Denkichi's



careful management\*. Hitherto I had not known the value of scorched rice, fish bones, and stale pickles and vegetables, but now I saw how many people would have to starve unless they could get these things. Yet those who were born in poverty and know nothing better, after all, do not suffer very much. Their suffering is merely physical, they have but two enemies, hunger and cold, and either one of them conquered for a time makes the other a contemptible foe. But think of the educated man who starts on the journey of life with the conviction that honesty, intelligence and ability, are sufficient to gain him a place in the world, but who finds that unless he enters into the world's conventional shams and follies it will have none of him, think of such a man driven into Poverty street and its ways, inch by inch, day by day, reduced to the small mean shifts of poverty, having to soil his body to keep his soul clean, whilst fraud and corruption revel in the best the land can afford. Then you have a picture of suffering that may well tempt a man to use his right to end it. If he does, what a number of friends suddenly turn up who would have helped him, had they but known he needed help, had the appeal for help but come from the gutter, in which the world insists upon seeing those who ask for its help, first.

It was pitiful to see with what joy we who carried this stale food were welcomed by the waiting crowd. I used to go all through the kitchen of the college to carry back as much as possible in return for this welcome that filled me with sadness. I was unhappy when there was little or nothing to carry back. On

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\* We have to let this characteristic little *naiveté* pass.

one occasion there were three carts full of broken victuals, how happy I was then, and how happy were those to whom these humble argosies brought their precious cargo of what to them were luxuries and good things. At one time there was quite a famine for three days, there was nothing for us to carry to Poverty street. It grieved my heart to see the distress and discouragement this interruption caused. At last I would no longer return empty handed and entreated the head servant of the college to let me have something, no matter what it was. He pointed out to me some spoiled *an* (bean paste) and some waste potatoes, saying that they were really only good to feed the pigs or to be used for manure, and there was also a little rice washed out of the large kettles, and some dregs of *miso* (bean soup). But even this poor stuff, I knew, would give some comfort to those who had been starving for days, and I took all there was. What joy there was when I came back. How much food is there, exclaimed one poor soul looking at the cart. When the master heard this he came out and said if there is any rice let them have it quickly.

We took down what there was, ranging the pots and jars side by side, and the crowd who had been famishing for three days eagerly looked into the pots and thought I had brought nice things indeed. But not a hand, let me tell you was stretched out to take anything, these people were famishing, yet they would not steal, and the master could not afford to give. One cup of the spoiled bean paste was sold for 5 *rin* that day, and there was a keen rivalry for the dregs of *miso* and the rice.

This cartful of kitchen refuse had perhaps saved

human lives which another day of famine might have ended, and I almost believed myself a benefactor of these poor people. Yet I was obliged to do what a man should not do, that is to take money for the miserable stuff that should have gone to feed the pigs or to manure the fields. Open your eyes, wide my friends, look upon the world, you will see some who sing and play for the poor, and who are looked upon as benevolent persons, and yet they may not always be able to do good. It is such a long way from them to the poor, and the poor cannot wait, the thread by which their life hangs is so slender, just a little more strain, another hour's suffering, may break it, and the fraction of a cent, or something that no one else has any use for, may make it last another day during which help may come, another day during which a ray of hope and happiness may light up their lives, so bare of all that makes life desirable and enjoyable to you. But too often the time-worn thread snaps, the slender reed upon which a poor wife and mother leaned is broken, and all there is to be said is that there is so much less misery, so much less suffering in the world. A doctor, often as poor as his patients, may say that the deceased died of such and such a disease. But this is not true, the disease of which he died was life such as you make it for the poor, he died of poverty which is the sum of all diseases, and in nine cases out of ten the poverty that kills the individual is only a form of murder committed by the many. One robs the poor of a bit of his bone to feed his dog, the other takes a piece of his muscle and converts it into some luxury, another cuts out a piece of the poor man's soul and wears it on his ring-finger, and when death comes at last, there is scarcely enough left to

satisfy death itself. Death takes the poor by the hundred therefore, and the world to satisfy its conscience gets magnifying glasses of great power and looks for microbes.

#### THE POOR MAN'S CLUB.

If a man has intercourse with literary men he will hear of matters concerning literature and if a man associates with politicians he will hear of politics. When a man therefore lives with the poor he hears of the condition of the poor and of the secrets of the poor, for they, as well as others, have their secrets and secret allusions, but, as others, they like to talk about them and have them understood. There are clubs and societies of many kinds in this world at which the failures or successes of their members are talked over and, if the truth is to be told, much scandal too, for clubs and societies are often the favourite haunts of liars and slanderers, whence they can hurl their venomous shafts from the shelter of anonymity at men whose blunt outspokenness has offended them at some time or other, but whom they could not charge with a single dishonorable action. At places where the poor meet also all manner of secrets and stories are retailed with much gusto, and no doubt with many an embellishment, and every day there is an incoming tide of fresh stories. The refuse rice shop in which I had been working took the place of a poor man's club of which I was the secretary. It had a very large membership. There was no balloting, the dear friend who shook hand with you one moment, could not fire a black ball into your back the next. One had not even to be poor or a rogue, or a good fellow, that is a man who will drink and gamble at any time and with any one,

to be admitted, all were welcome. But the centre of nearly all the stories was the empty stomach that had been filled in some unexpected way. Here is one of those stories :

A law school once held an open air exercise on the Awoyama parade ground and a large number of boxes with lunch had been prepared by the steward of the school, so that some three or four hundred were left. The steward then called a poor boy and told him to go and tell as many poor people as he could that all that good food was to be given away. The boy sped away calling out to the people that there was a big school funeral on the parade grounds and that everybody was to come, the custom being that at large funerals alms were given away, so that the boy mistook that unexpected windfall for a funeral. Soon more than a hundred people had gathered to harvest where they had not sown. That was a happy day, every one, even children who could just walk, received a box of food, and there was great rejoicing, many eating their meal on the spot. The report still spread, and those who came later found nothing but empty boxes, in some of them however a little was still left, so that a meal could be scraped together, and at last when a couple of beggars had gone through the heap of boxes for the third time, there was not enough left for the ants. In the traditions of the poor this story will live as long as amongst the members of some princely house the memory of the brave deed of some famous ancestor. The annals of the poor do not record many such red letter days.

Once a placard announcing that rice would be given away was seen posted up everywhere. It

said: "The Director of the.....Company is going to give away 50 *koku* (about 9,000 liter) of uncleaned rice to the poor of Tokyo *fu* at the Sengakuji temple in Takanawa. Five *go* will be given to each person."

So the poor people said to themselves, five *go* is not much and the way to Takanawa is far, but three people can live for a day on five *go* of rice, and the times are hard, let us go and get it therefore. Many therefore walked a long way, but when they came to Takanawa, tired and hungry, they were only given tickets for which they were to get rice the next day. That is not charity, the poor cannot wait for the morrow, if they could, they would no longer be poor, and whatever is given should be ready for immediate use. The poor will not mind to tramp for miles if at the end of the journey there is also the end of suffering for that day. But to give them tickets that will be redeemed next day is like the deed of a man who does not think of the suffering of a fish in a wagon track. There is a Chinese story of a wise man named Soshi who went out some day and saw a fish in a wagon track. The fish entreated the wise man to give him some water.

The wise man said: "I am<sup>2</sup> traveling to<sup>2</sup> the south now and there is a large lake there, I will divert the water of the lake to this place so that you can swim out and will have abundant water after I get there."

"You are very kind," said the fish, "but how can I wait till you get to the south, the water in the track here is drying up every minute." There is a great deal of distress that has to wait till some one goes "south" to divert a lake or a river from its course, and mostly such promises are never meant to

be more than promises. They are the mockery of mean despicable souls, the small change of the miser who only too often succeeds in getting the reputation of a philanthropist on them. In the olden times the rice given for relief was piled up high in bags in a yard and distributed there. Some therefore, contrived, to get three or four rations, which they did not keep for themselves however, but gave again to poor neighbours, so that there was no cause for complaint.

Stories like these, all of them revolving about a boiling of rice were the daily topics of conversation amongst the poor. The old fellows amongst them chronicle in their memories all that relates to the rice that is left over in public establishments. One of them said that twenty years ago the troops had to stay in various houses as there were no garrison buildings then, and those houses were called *heitai yashiki*. The poor in those days would not eat the rice which the soldiers had left, for the people were still proud of the fact that they were residents of the great city, Yedo, so that the cooks had to throw that rice into the sea, whilst now it cannot always be obtained even for money. This shows that the country has become poorer. Some cunning people have been even formed companies to buy up all kitchen refuse and that is what makes it so dear. If there were men like Danton and Marat in Japan to undertake the publication of a paper in the interests of the poor, I could fill its pages with the sufferings of the poor. I had now been for some time in this business, partly as a recorder of the lives of the poor, and partly doing work that helped to sustain their lives. Under former circumstances my existence

was almost useless, but here I had become a very important person who could not be spared even for a day. But I was on a voyage of exploration, and it would not do for me to remain at anchor so long in the same port. I hove up anchor therefore and left, taking with me 25 cents, which was a week's wages, and one pair of clogs which the master presented to me. I brought up at Mr. Shimizu Yahei's place, where a number of labourers were lodging, and stopped there for a while, making plans for my next voyage.

San Francisco is thronged with labourers from all parts of the world who come there to get work in the mines of California, and Mr. Shimizu's place was a small San Francisco in its way, labourers coming from Etchu, Echigo Kaga, Echizen and other provinces. They had strong bodies and each of them had plans and hopes of his own. Some wished to become stable boys in the official quarters of Nagato cho, some desired to get employment in the rice kitchens in the prostitute quarters, or in restaurants, others again were looking for positions in piecegoods stores, saké shops and breweries and so forth. Many come to Tokyo in the belief that it is easier to earn money there than in the country, but many go away disappointed, wishing they had gone to the wilds of the Hokkaido instead. The capital keeps all that is brought into it, money, health, happiness and honour, and its temptations and pleasures assail these valuable possessions at one and the same time, and he who comes out of the battle with more than one of them has fought a brave fight indeed. Every one covets what his neighbour has, and the stranger who has to pay for his experience at every step



he makes, soon finds his slender resources gone.

Amongst the labourers at Mr. Shimizu's there were some who had spent all they had been able to save during years of hard work, so that want was staring them in the face in the midst of plenty. One man who had lost all his belongings in a fire at Sapporo had come down in hopes to be able to make a living in Tokyo. On the whole then, all these men were a very good company, but they were no judges of character, least of all perhaps of their own, and that is the most serious disadvantage in the struggle for life. But some of them had still a little money left, although they had sent money to their homes regularly. As they cannot write they will pay some one 2 cts. or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cts. to write a letter for them. Their clothes and socks are neatly packed in willow baskets around which a large cotton cloth is wrapped to prevent pilfering, for poverty and hunger are powerful tempters, and they are never far from those who have to work for a living. Inside of their clothes, on their breast, these men mostly keep small almanachs in which the seasons and principal festivals are marked, and which are called *hashira goyomi* or *kojin goyomi*. Some also have little slips with sacred writing as amulets. In moments of leisure they would go into calculations of how many *tsubo* of land their present and future savings would buy them, and although people of so many different kinds and occupations were lodging at Shimizu's, eight or nine out of ten seemed to have succeeded in their modest plans. Some of these men had served as rice cooks in the war or carried provisions and baggage after the army, at their homes they cultivate the fields, in the cities they work in kitchens, but always

on the lower levels of society. How simple their course of ideas, how easy they are in their minds. Sufficient work and moderate wages fulfil all their hopes, and their green mountain home to which they return at last, is an earthly paradise to them. They have neither story nor history in their lives, lives that pass between their morning and evening prayers in the same monotonous way, but their bodies and souls are clean. Were I not a cripple, in a manner of speaking, that is if study had not unfitted me for such a simple life, I would enter into their fellowship immediately, and as it is even I would at any time sooner meet one of those humble workers who calmly *does* his allotted share of the world's work than a hundred glib-tongued politicians who have a hundred theories as to how it *should* be done.

During the few days that I stayed with them I often acted as their secretary and wrote or read their letters for them, so that they paid me a great deal of honour, whilst I, on my part, thus got much insight into their character and learned many a useful lesson. I was still considering what to do next when a man from an employment office came round and said that a man had run away from a vegetable store and that some one was wanted in his place at once.

#### SHIN-AMI CHO.

Shin-ami cho, where my new place of work was, is situated near Shiba ura which is like a lip to the mouth of Tokyo through which travelers enter the capital from the Tokaido, and forms a triangle with Yotsuya and Shitaya, the homes of the poor. It contains a collection of some 500 dilapidated houses which are dirtier than any and which are inhabited by the poorest of the poor.

In Samegahashi the houses adjoin one another like the carriages of a railway train and the place is comparatively clean. In Mannen cho (Ten thousand years street) however, the alleys are in ruins, but the people who live there are used to their surroundings and it does not need much to make them happy. Shin ami cho, however, shows a degree of dirt and ruin that almost defies description. The alleys are a swamp of dirty water, dead rats are festering in the sun, the closets have to take care of themselves, heaps of old clogs, spoiled rice and fish are lying about, the roofs are repaired with pieces of broken mats, and the place looks a fort in a wilderness that has been riddled by shot and shell.

A fort in a wilderness truly, in the wilderness of a great city, all but unknown to the rest of it, and riddled by the shots of adversity. Does the world know or care what desperate battles the garrison fought before it had to take refuge in that terrible fort that need no longer fear any enemy, not even death, for death has become a daily visitor against whom no one thinks of even barring the door. Does the great city ever think of the terrible waste of life in that fort in the wilderness, can it find no work for the men and women who live there in a state worse than slaves because they have no owner to whom they represent money, can it teach them and their children no useful work that will enable them to live in modest comfort and decency, are hunger and want stronger than the armies who humbled the Chinese Empire? It almost seems so. It is the last refuge on the face of the earth, so crowded, oh so crowded with all its woe and misery, and so barren of all that makes life enjoyable

or even bearable, and those who enter it have thrown away their arms, they only need teeth and nails like beasts of prey, they have abandoned hope, and between them and death there is but a step, and no one fears to approach the brink. The world has taken from them all that it can take. But there are charity organisations, some may say. So there are, but what is charity but a cloak for former robbery and neglect. In a well organized state there should be no need for charity.

In that quarter even the larger houses seldom contain five mats, that is less than 10 feet square, and most of the houses contain only two or three mats, with a "back yard" of 2 feet wide. Some families divide a room of two *tsubo* (12×6 feet) into halves by hanging a mat in the middle, and in that narrow space some six or seven persons of both sexes, from the old grandmother down to the new-born child, pass their days, scarcely sheltered from rain and wind. The mats are as brown as the feathers of an old fishhawk and scarcely hold together. An old box made of split bamboos (*tsuzura*) is the principal piece of furniture in the house, but, poor as it is, a small Buddhist shrine is hung on the wall. The gods have forsaken the poor, but the poor, one scarcely understands why, still cling to the gods. The little table and the few household utensils show that they have been in every battle that their owners fought, and on what food! The entrails of horses, cattle and other animals are cut into small pieces in itinerant kitchens where they are cooked and put on small bamboo skewers. Around these kitchens the children of the poor gather in hopes of a mouthful for nothing, and orders

are given for *hoku*, *fuwa*, *shita* etc., for the refuse that is sold has still different names like the various dishes in a restaurant, but the price is in accordance with the establishment. One skewer costs half a cent. I saw a child not a year old, carried on the back of a little girl, its eyes had no lustre, and it had no teeth yet, but a stick with this refuse was given to it, and it cried in its vain efforts to get nourishment out of it. Some children were burying a dead cat, probably a former pet that had afforded them a little amusement in their cheerless lives, another crowd of children were sweeping a gutter for amusement and got themselves bespattered with mud, and when they grow up they will sweep the gutters for a living, or do work of a similar kind. They will always remain near the gutter, there is no getting away from it, except in rare instances. The southern part of Shin ami cho which adjoins a more prosperous locality is less poor than the northern part. Little rivulets of money seem to find their way into it and they do not dry up without leaving a trace. Those living in the northern part, however, are but little above beggars, jinrikisha coolies being in the majority. Then there are rag men, the usual variety of menders of old things and representatives of other trades of the very poor. But those still earn some money every day unless the weather is bad. But there are lower depths into which no ray of light ever penetrates. There are those who have no occupation and are driven by black care all the year round. Some make a living by catching shrimps, some by angling small fish, some gather *amana*, a kind of eatable seaweed, and a fairly good fishing rod is quite a valuable piece of property, and a few cents are a working

capital large enough to begin almost anything with. Gate keepers of various exhibitions, and people who keep guard for gamblers also live here, and it is only natural that we must expect to encounter crime too. We find sharp-faced boys from about twelve to fifteen years of age who move as swiftly and as lightly as swallows and are as agile as monkeys. They are young pickpockets who rifle the pockets of sightseers on festival days, and pickpockets in Japan have an easy public to deal with. The sense of sight, when gratified by some spectacle or exhibition, down to the antics of a street vendor, seems to absorb all faculties, so that the light-fingered gentry have an easy game, which scarcely anybody but a detective can spoil. But crime has its divisions in Shinamicho as it has in the cities of Europe and America, there are "*man-biki*," "ten thousand pickers," or thieves who spy out opportunities in houses and steal in the absence of the inhabitants, and others described by various cant terms. The police, however, know many of them and keep their eyes on them.

Clothing, food and shelter are the three principle items of expense in this locality as elsewhere and amongst all classes, but the poor feel the pressure of house rent most, and it is needless to say that in Shinamicho and Samegahashi the house rent is collected every day, for if it was collected monthly the poor people who live there would never get the rent together, so that the landlords, who are often scarcely less poor than their tenants, must collect their rent every day or at least every other day. The rents vary with the accommodation furnished. For houses of the first class having one room of four and a half mats, for instance, and one of two mats (1 mat is 6 x 3 feet)

the rent is 4 cents a day. Those houses have tolerable fittings but there are very few of them in the homes of poverty.

In the so so-called *nagaya*, that is long houses under one roof divided into compartments, a dwelling occupies only three mats, placed side by side, so that household work has to be done outside. For such a room the charge is only 2 or 3 cents a day and the accomodation scarcely differs from the tents of Arabs and other wild tribes. But there are habitations that rent for from 40 to 50 cents per month, they are ruins that are never repaired, and are more like caves or hiding places of wild beasts. What high qualities can be expected of those who live in them, what high qualities, if they existed, could survive in them. Three *sen* a day may seem a trifle, but it is no trifle for people of small means, so that many divide the expense by taking a house together. Those who earn ten *yen* a month use one half for food, whilst the other half is used for house rent, clothing bedding, household utensils and various daily necessities, so that they barely manage to exist. They cannot afford any amusement, therefore, they cannot afford to associate with others, they must live and suffer alone. No need to say, therefore, that they cannot afford anything for adornment, or to put by for a rainy day. But the desire for a little pleasure and for the company of their kind is still strong, and company and pleasure is sought in spite of the distress that the next day threatens. Sometimes a little money has also to be spent for funerals, neighbourly congratulations, and similar occasions, so that there is never any cash on hand. That is the general condition, and the only comfort is that no

appearances have to be kept up. But there are those who earn so little that a day's work scarcely buys more than a meal. The house rent is scraped together by the wife who does a little work at home. The purchase of wood, charcoal, salt or *miso* (bean-soup), and of other necessities of humble life in turn, has to be put off as necessity demands, and something is always wanting. Clothing comes last therefore, and some lucky chance has to be waited for to get it, or money has to be borrowed on *hinashi*, that is money at high interest which has to be returned in daily instalments.

The occupation of jinrikisha pullers is quite a profitable one in the estimation of Poverty street, and a daily earning of about 30 *sen* compares very favorably with other occupations in that quarter. But jinrikisha rent, straw sandals, candles and other minor items of expenditure, take away 10 *sen* and more per day, and the net returns are no more than the wages earned by other coolies or labourers. An able man gets about 22 or 23 *sen* for a day's work\*

From that money rice, which is the chief item of expenditure, is bought and wood. Next come 1 *sen* for sauce (*shoyu*) 1 *sen* for *miso*, 1 *sen* for oil, 1 *sen* for fish, some more money goes for cheap pickled vegetables, tobacco, tea, charcoal, house rent etc. etc. All these expenses wait for the wage earner like hungry wolves to attack him upon his return, from right and left, in front and behind, snarling, snapping and yelping, and each, with famished eyes and gleaming teeth, trying to rob the other of its

\* That may have been so when the author of the book made his observations. At present coolies often get a dollar a day, and the regular pay varies from 45 to 75 *sen*



share. Heaven grant that you may never have to fight such a battle, it makes saints or heroes of some men, and savages or criminals of others, and the hands of all men are against either. The Penal Code has no punishment for the crime of poverty. The world has ever considered it its duty to supply the deficiency. If you rob it, do so with daintily gloved hands, rob it between the walnuts and the wine. Then it will help you do so, become your accomplice, and every hair even of the ermine on the bench will stand up in your defence, every one with whom you clinked glasses will shed tears over your misfortune, and you will have an array of extenuating circumstances thrust upon you that would make the judge, who was so blind to all these considerations as to meet out to you the same punishment that it is meted out to a man who steals a loaf for his hungry children, appear as a very savage. Take care, therefore, that no one can give the damning evidence against you that you have been known to look for work.

No sooner is the poor man's purse opened when he returns to his home than the greatest part of its contents takes flight, like a swarm of bees or locusts. A capital of 20 *sen* per day will however start a seller of *suiton* (small dumplings made of wheat flour and boiled in *shoyu*.) The same capital is sufficient to start an *inarizushi* or a macaroni kitchen. The profits consist mostly of what is left over, that is a meal or two a day, and the cash received is the capital of the next day. But this business is mostly carried on in the evening, and during the day some other occupation is followed. Some sell clams in the morning, have some sedentary work during the day, and keep little wayside stores of

all manner of odds and ends during the early hours of the night. Continued rainy weather, however, very much affects this small source of income, and that often leads to the saké shop and the pawnbroker or money lender. Thus a heavy load is placed on the back of these people, of which even 12 hours work a day cannot relieve them. A proverb says "the condition of a poor man is like one sitting on a rock, for a rock you cannot plow, nor get water by digging into it, and although you may strike it with steel the result is only sparks which give neither light nor heat."

#### LENDERS OF MONEY AND OF GOODS.

The world is kept moving principally by the fact that some people want what others have got, and trade both internal and international is the result, but if the object is a kingdom, or a country, the result is war. Our work, however, lies not with the battles of emperors and kings, but with those that are fought every day by the poor with pawnbrokers, *hinashi kashi*, and *mujinko*, that is small money lenders, and with lenders of articles that the poor need, but cannot always afford to buy. The premises of this plutocracy of the poor show that the business is a profitable one. Their houses in Shin ami cho, Samegahashi, Man nen cho and Mikawa cho have fine gates, and have fire proof godowns attached to them, and on the walls, or fences, sharp spikes are placed to prevent thieves and burglars from getting the share of the world's riches which they consider their due. The Japanese call those spikes "*shinobi gageshi*" which means "the drivers back of sneaking fellows," but, truly, the houses of the poor are more

in need of such spikes. The houses of money lenders and pawnbrokers are not only strong, but they also display much wealth, whilst the houses that surround them are in ruins. There is an Eastern fable of a magnetic mountain in the sea which drew out the bolts and iron fastenings from the ships that passed so that they went to pieces and the crews perished. In the same way, and with the same result, the pawn shop and the house of the money lender draws out the copper from the houses of the poor. Have you ever visited a pawn shop in Poverty street? Probably not, but if you were to pass a day in one and to observe how business is done there you would be surprised to see how hard the world can be upon those sentenced by some inscrutable power to live and to suffer in it, for ever with a weight of care on their breasts that scarcely permits them to draw a free breath. The customers of those shops are mostly jinrikisha coolies, rag men, second hand clothes dealers, *botefuri*, that is men who carry their wares on poles on their shoulders, and workmen of all descriptions, a fact which shows that the more work, and the harder it is, the less pay. You may imagine then what valuables these poor people have to pledge. There is the *shirushi banten*, a kind of an open blouse with the name of the house that employs the wearer printed on the back in large characters, which, as a rule, is a present, other wearing apparel of poor cheap stuff, but still representing a value; bedding, mosquito nets, etc.; and when times are very hard, rice tubs, into which the boiled rice is put, iron kettles, paper umbrellas, and braziers, little low tables, pails, *hakimono*, that is clogs, sandals, and socks, and even waggon wheels are given as security.

The pawn broker does not refuse anything that has cost above 10 *sen*, and lends money on it. He does so, however, with a very fine sense of proportion acquired by very long training, during which he has had to encounter wits as keen as his own, for poverty keeps a terrible school. One must graduate with honors from it or die. At his counter the pawn-broker meets customers as keen as those who dazzle the eyes of a bank president with horses and carriages, expensive dinners and wines, and bits of paper less valuable than the broken kettle of Poverty street, which has to make good its case without such seductive adjuncts. As bedding, umbrellas old kettles etc., however, are not first class security, pawnbrokers charge double and treble the usual interest for loans on goods of that character. The Government regulations recognize an interest of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *sen* per *yen* per month, but there are few whose pledges reach that value, the usual amounts running up from 10 to about 50 *sen*, and the rate of interest on those small loans often reaches 8 % per month, that is, within a fraction, cent per cent per annum. The lenders often want their pledges again so soon that an article pledged in the morning is taken out again in the evening and something else is pledged instead. For every such substitution 8 *rin* or 1 *sen* is charged, the so called "*shari*," and the pawn shops are kept pretty busy with this class of depositors, who are called "*go jiki san*," and sometimes special facilities are granted them. If a tobacco pipe, for instance, is substituted, they are allowed to take it out and use it for a day or two. It does not pay the poor to be dishonest in these transactions. The busiest financiers, next to the pawnbroker, are the *hinashi*, the lenders of money

that has to be paid back in daily instalments, and for which a high interest is charged. There are two ways of lending and repaying money. If any one borrows one *yen*, he has to repay 3 *sen* per day for forty days. These transactions are called *soto hinashi*. If any one, however, borrows 80 *sen* and pays back 2 *sen* per day for fifty days, the operation is called *uchi hinashi*. But it is as long as it is broad, the interest is precisely the same, that is at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  *sen* per day, that is 182% per annum. In addition to this tremendous interest, however, the borrower has to pay the lender a charge of 5 *sen* "for his trouble," and 1 *sen* has to be paid for the stamp on the promissory note, so that the debtor never receives the full amount of his loan. If he is unable to repay all, the lender will lend him some more money so as to make up the original amount of the loan, and thus the interest keeps mounting up, so that is common that *yen* 3.60 has to be paid as interest for one year for the loan of 1 *yen*. As the lender can, moreover, at once invest the money repaid in fresh loans he can make it do double work, and what goes out in the morning comes back with the spoils of the day in the evening, so that at the end of a year 1 *yen* has often produced 7 or 8 *yen*. A wonderful example of multiplication indeed. The rats in a house are said to multiply in the same way, but nothing else in the world does. The debtor may not be a fool, but he does not go into figures, and if he did it would make no difference. His present needs do not permit him to see anything else, so that he is like a man who is being operated upon under the influence of chloroform, and who does not know that he is losing blood while he is asleep.

Sometimes, however, security is not required. A *jinrikisha* puller, for instance, may want some money near the end of the year. He goes to a money lender and says he will pay him within the first three days of the new year. The lender knows that the man is sure to earn money in those three days and grants him the loan. But an exorbitant interest is charged, the borrower having to pay 40 or 50 *sen* for a loan of 50 or 60 *sen*, but he cannot stop to consider, only a few days of the old year remain, and he must have the money to get the holiday clothes—such as they may be—of his wife and children out of pawn, and to buy *mochi* (a tough rice dow which is cut into squares, toasted over a charcoal fire, when it is eaten with *nori*, a kind of seaweed, and soy). At that time of the year the business of the money lenders flourishes, but at the same time the most risk is run. The people who depend on their good offices should remember that the rice they buy from money thus obtained costs them more than double the price that others pay for their rice. The poor therefore eat the dearest rice.

Next come the lenders of clothing, quilts and *jinrikisha*. The charge for quilts is from 8 *rin* to 1 *sen* per piece per night, whilst the charge for a set of three silk quilts is from 30 to 60 *sen* per night. The latter, of course, are only borrowed by the better classes. The charge for clothes is from 3 to 6 *sen* per piece per day, and the lenders of *jinrikisha* often lend the coolies suitable clothes in addition. The busiest time for lenders of bed quilts is from December to March, for how can the poor who have scarcely money enough to buy new clothing have any money for quilts? They depend upon the heat of the sun

as long as they can, that is till about December, and then it becomes necessary to patronize the lender of bedding. Some who are surprised at the amount they are charged for the convenience firmly resolve to have their own bedding made in the future. But, alas for the resolutions of the poor! The summer has its wants too, and when the winter knocks at the door again the lender of quilts is again resorted to, and thus it goes on year after year. That is why the business of a lender of quilts is so profitable.

In Shin ami cho, Shiba, there are about 350 houses, seven of which are occupied by lenders of quilts, and about the middle of January there are so many calls for quilts that the demand can scarcely be supplied.

The quilts are very thin and made of rags sown together, but even for such a poor article 1 *sen* per night has to be paid, and the people who do borrow them are poor indeed. If the rent is not paid, however, the quilt is pitilessly torn away from the shivering wretches to whom it gives a little protection from the biting cold, and any one possessed of the least humane feeling could not follow the occupation of a lender of quilts.

There is a simple but terrible logic in the lives of the poor. The pawnshop furnishes money with which the pangs of hunger may be staved off, and the shop that lends quilts helps to keep out the cold. As soon as one necessity therefore is provided for the other cries aloud, and some people will pawn the borrowed quilt that kept them warm during the night for money to buy food for the day. A quilt that is lent for 2 *sen* a night, will bring 30 *sen* at the pawnbroker's. But the respite from the fangs of the

wolf at the door is only brief. The rent for the quilt has to be paid every day, and, the quilt being pawned, the cruel voiceless spectre of the cold rises again, and another quilt is borrowed and pawned, for which rent has to be paid, but the sphere of action is very much circumscribed so that trouble speedily follows. Hunger and cold make their own laws, but those laws have no place amongst the laws of the land, and obedience to the former leads to crimes against the latter, but the punishment and the suffering which otherwise would have to be endured are so finely balanced that it really does not much matter which course is chosen. The man who defrauds a bank of a million commits a crime too, but it is a crime that appeals to the sympathies of the world, the meshes of the law are only for small fry, they cannot hold such big fish, and the hands of the man between whose fingers the million melted show no stain. They are white and clean, and he can call hosts of witnesses that he has never done any work, never tried to do any work. That lets him off. Courts and victims are equally eager to start him on another career of plunder, the latter in hopes of getting a share of it, and the former venting their vexation that they cannot come in for a share on a poor shivering wretch who pawned a quilt that did not belong to him for a few cents to buy a meal. And when these things are no longer we too shall have ceased to exist and to suffer. There will be new forms of suffering, new crimes produced by them, and new punishments, but the weight that oppresses the heart of the one who stands alone amongst his kind, suffering all that they suffer, in addition to his own sufferings, powerless to alleviate either, remains the same. Scalding tear



will plow the same burning furrows, and the surface will be the the same smiling lie. Souls will be bartered but for coins of different denominations, the dance around the golden calf will be danced but to a different tune, the Messiah will be put to death in a different way, but the lusts and the passions will ever be the same, and over all will reign and rule the eternal curse of gold. Alas that it should be so !

When times are hard jinrikisha coolies will pawn the wheels of their vehicles, washerwomen will pawn the clothes that do not belong to them, and this is wrong, the law calls it a crime and the world continue to make criminals that commit such crimes. It demands nothing but that crime shall be successful and wear a fashionable garb to divest it of its ugly name.

In times of need, however, not only clothes and household utensils are taken to the pawnshop, but even eatables ready for use, for which something else has to be got, plants in flower pots, etc., and nothing is refused. A cat and a canary even have been pawned, and cats, you must know, are held in great affection in Japan. But that does not end the list. Sometimes *ihai*, that is the wooden tablets on which posthumous name of a dead person is written or carved, are pawned. And yet there are still more ways of getting money easily. Beggars borrow little children of two or three years of age and take them to festivals to sit by the wayside to excite the compassion of the public, and they are not disappointed. Many a copper is thrown to them and the parents of the children also make some money by lending them.

## NEW STREETS.

The city of Osaka is very rich and contains 160,000 houses which cover about 3 square miles. It is a great city but if you ascend the Tennoji pagoda you can look over the whole city from corner to corner, and to look over Kyoto you have only to ascend Atago hill or to go up to the Kyomizu temple. Yokohama you can overlook from Noge hill, but from the highest points of Tokyo you can only see one-third or one-fifth of the city, and hence the great hungry beast is more dangerous. A day may come when it will learn its strength, and that it need no longer hunger and suffer to provide luxury and ease for its keepers. Then the unseen coils will begin to tighten, and the beast will find that it can crush, that the bars of the cage that confine it are mere stage property, painted paper to which it has given its face value. Then a soul will be born unto the beast, a soul of passion whose fire will devour its rags and its filth, its very self, and the glorious immortal soul that rises from the ashes will clothe itself with a new body of light that will give food and warmth to all alike, and the roar of the beast will become a song of thanksgiving and praise that will find a joyful echo in the far corners of the land. As yet, however, the beast is blind, as blind as its keepers.

Once upon a time a number of blind men were asked by a king what an elephant was like, and the servants of the king brought an elephant into the yard of the king's house. Then the blind men began to pass their hands over the body of the animal. Some who felt its belly said it was like a drum, others again who grasped its stout legs said it was like a barrel; others again who put their hands on it

ears said it was like a winnowing basket, still another who had caught its tail said it was like a broom, and thus none of them could tell what this great, strange animal was really like.

In the same way there are many hundreds of writers in Tokyo, some of whom write books of many leaves, and others who write papers of many columns, but each of them only describes that which he touches or that which touches him, and none of can tell you what the great city is like, nor describe its varying moods. And it still continues to grow, thousands are born in it and thousands flock to it from all parts of the country, waste land that has lain idle for years is being covered with houses, the old mansions of princes and nobles have disappeared and in their place we find busy streets. Where courtly silence reigned, broken only by low voices that spoke to the lord of a mansion in respectful cadence, or by whispers of secret love, sometimes of hatred and treason too, and where stately pines swayed in the evening breeze, to-day the bell of the horse car clangs its discordant notes, the hungry coolie in scarce articulate words solicits a fare, and the lover of the old dreamy days of stately ease hies himself away to the mysterious shades of the trees whose boughs sigh over the Shoguns' graves at Uyeno, over which the large black butterflies noiselessly flutter like shadows of the past. Ah, what rest is there in an hour spent sitting on the mossgrown stones of even an unknown grave, how the soul longs to commune with him who lies in it, how the body loathes to return to the roar of the restless, feverish city, that holds it by a thousand threads, invisible as air yet strong as steel, threads from whose meshes

neither body nor soul can escape. The names of the streets alone remind the busy world of to-day of the dim past that so rapidly recedes from view. There are Satsuma ga hara in Mita, Tsugaru ga hara in Honjo, Satake ga hara in Shitaya, the Sakai mansion stands on the ground where the Shogun's War Department reared its grim walls, and thus the old continually gives way to the new, and every day a portion of it in turn becomes dust that mingles with the dust of the past.

Amongst the streets just named Satake ga hara in Shitaya was opened for dwellings of the poor. It is about three *cho*\* (1 *cho* = 359 feet square) and is occupied by about 2,000 houses separated by streets crossing one another at right angles. The houses are *nagaya*, that is long houses under one roof, in which the separate dwellings are divided by partitions, and in those houses the small trades and industries of the poor are carried on. The fancy stores of such quarters are called *Yorozuya*, that is "the seller of ten thousand things. There are also a number of *tateba* where poor people may rest for a while and obtain cheap refreshments, story tellers rooms, cheap theaters, auction rooms and the like. If you walk into the restaurants, where horseflesh, maccaroni and other cheap dishes are sold you will find that the rooms are very poor, but on the walls you will find large placards announcing the flattering fact that such and such a present has been sent to the shop by an appreciative patron. Mr. M., for instance, has sent a present of 3 *yen* with his kind wishes for the prosperity of the establishment; Mr. N. has sent 10

\* *Cho* stands both for a block of houses and the street that passes them, with a descriptive prefix.

horse-loads of "Masamune," a kind of strong saké, all of which is very fine reading, but as a matter of fact nothing but the placards has been presented. Thus even poverty has its humour and little jokes. In the *yosé* songs are sung and legends are told which are not without a certain educational value so that the poor acquire in this way a knowledge of the history of their country which would otherwise remain a sealed book to many, and if the Government would take a little practical interest in those *yosé*, for instance by giving the ill-paid teachers of elementary schools a small remuneration for delivering lectures at them in the evenings, much useful knowledge might be spread, and the teachers would have a welcome addition to their scant means.

The guests of the horseflesh restaurants and *tempuraya* in this quarter are mostly gentlemen with *shirushi banten*, that is blue cotton business coats with the name of the house they serve printed in large characters on the back, so that there is no necessity for an exchange of cards, and the maids who attend upon them, fresh and rosy as many of them are, can lay no claim to beauty, for beauty in the capital soon rises to higher levels, but they have a bright bit of crimson band in their hair, and a more liberal than judicious use of *oshiroi* (face powder) on face and necks makes them look quite passable. Added to this an inexhaustible stock of good nature, ever ready to burst out in a ringing laugh about anything or nothing, one might go further for cheerful company and fare worse. Such is life in Satake *cho*.

#### AUCTION ROOMS.

In the three square *cho* of Satake *ga hara* there are many second hand stores out of whose necessities

two auction rooms have grown, that is two huts or sheds with tin roofs. The staff consists of a chief, *serikata* (*seri*, a corruption of sales, and *kata*, gentleman, the sales gentleman) who has the necessary practical knowledge of the goods, an accountant, and two or three storekeepers. The goods offered are mostly unsalable stock that has to be got rid of and range from pieces of furniture to old clogs and whatever else is of use in a poor man's life. The auctioneer charges only a commission of 3.5 % which is paid in equal halves by buyers and sellers. Auction rooms of this kind have been in existence for over two hundred years. In Tokyo a bundle of wood as thin as matches costs 2 cents, and bamboo chips, waste straw and old straw matting, all of which are used as fuel, cost money, and when an article is put up for sale in these auction rooms the first idea of the buyer is how many kettles of rice it will boil, and much practice has made him perfect in that sort of calculation. For this reason then all old and battered furniture has a price, the price of fuel, and, considering how much wood is burned every year in the shape of houses, it is no wonder that the price of fuel is the standard by which goods are valued in these auction rooms. Doors and floors even are often broken and used to make the rice kettle boil when other fuel cannot be bought. But things are nevertheless not sold at any price, if the auctioneer cannot get a sufficiently high bid the article is withdrawn. The bids are made in the denominations of the old coin that is no longer current, but which evidently have some other meaning, as the *koban*, an old large gold piece, is heard amongst the prices offered.

Where there are a thousand houses the people can always make a living amongst one another, and in Tokyo there are 300,000 houses so that any honest man who is willing to work need not be afraid of being unable to make a living. It is only a question of attention and health. There are an immense number of small retail shops distributed over the 8 square miles of Tokyo which each require a working capital of about \$10, which commonly earns them 25 cents a days. But business is like war, sometimes that small capital is swept away, and it requires no tidal wave of adversity to do it, nor does it require a great wave of good luck to restore former prosperity. A short time is often sufficient, therefore, to land a merchant of Poverty street in a fine wide thoroughfare, with a store and servants, when money is very quickly made.

Amongst the second hand dealers there are also a number of brokers who mostly recruit themselves from the ranks of merchants who have failed in business, but who go on doing business without a cent of their own. They are known by the slang term of *batta* (locusts), perhaps on account of their roving habits which are essential to their business. They are usually honest so that no guarantee is required of them.

The clothes of deceased persons, the quilts used by sick people and the belongings of people who died an unnatural death are refused by ordinary buyers, so that they are sold for very little money to the rag men. The money paid for them is called *niamida sen* (tear money).

#### TO EAT WITHOUT WORK.

A familiar proverb says that "to live without work even a mountain will move," and when a man comes

down from prosperity to a lower condition he is always ready to live without work for a time, According to circumstances such an idle life sometimes continues for ten or even twenty years, but mostly only for two or three years, and if it is very short for four or five months. When a man goes to ruin he sells his house and furniture and what merchandise he may have and removes to a smaller house. His expenses are reduced from \$30 a month to \$10, and he is ashamed to deal with the people who supplied him in the days of his prosperity, and all would be well if he worked to add to his reduced means, but the god of idleness commands him to live without work and how could he disobey that command. His ready money goes in the first year, his furniture in the second and in the third year friends who have helped him so far disappear, and then he sinks to a lower stratum, and questionable means and methods are resorted to to make money without work. An abandoned claim for money is taken into Court, and if the claim is successful there is money for a further period of idleness. Then, when there is trouble between others, the idler will act as an intermediary and make some money that way, and some even sell the stone monuments in the graveyards, which were erected to their ancestors, who died in prosperity and had fine monuments put up to them therefore. The \$1000 which were obtained in the first year of ruin by the sale of property go faster than the \$100 of the second year, and the latter go faster than the \$10 of the third year, and that is the rule in a life without work. A few, however, pick themselves up again, and often become dealers in second hand goods.



## THE VEGETABLE MARKET.

There are some half dozen large vegetable markets in Tokyo and life in them begins very early. The farmers of the surrounding villages get up at midnight and arrivals with market produce begin at about two o'clock in the morning and last till about eight. At the Ta cho market in Kanda there is a concourse every morning of about 50,000 people and if a coin were thrown up it would not fall to the ground, so crowded is the place. Sunlight and the earth have produced all that there is for sale there, the chemistry of nature has produced wonders that far surpass the art of man, but man sets his price on them.

The language of the dealers, so far as the public knows, might be that of South sea islanders, so different is it from ordinary Japanese. They have a slang of their own (like the Whitechapel costermongers) and the characters they write are also very difficult to decipher. Names too are abbreviated to save time. Yawo ji, for instance, stands for Yawoya Jimbei; Yoro Kan for Yorozuya Kambei, Ban Gen for Genkichi in Bancho, etc., and probably the writer himself, after some time, would not know what it all meant, but it facilitates business for the moment, and there are no long accounts to be kept. A great feature of these markets is to have for sale fruits and vegetables long before and after their proper season, such as young bamboo shoots in the cold winter cucumbers in the early spring and the latest autumn fruits in the hot summer. Such a large fluctuating population, of course has many wants and a number of perambulating vendors of goods of all kinds make a living by providing for them, and the beggars pick up the refuse.

## HOMELESS COOLIES.

Where there are landings for ships, where more than three warehouses stand, where cargoes are discharged from lighters or taken in by lighters, where markets are held, and where factories are established, there the coolies gather who are known as *nakashi*. They usually wear a pad on their shoulders, as they have to do much carrying, and besides that only a single garment. They are usually not engaged by the day, but paid by the piece for what work they do. They do not form a special class, but any one who can find nothing better to do may join them. There are always a large number of them in Reiganjima, an island part of Tokyo formed by branches of the Sumida river; about the lumber yards and rice godowns in Fukagawa, and at similar places. In the vegetable markets they pull heavy loads for a distance of 3 *cho* for 3 cents, and only the strongest of them can do that work. At 7 o'clock in the morning they pull carts into the markets and at 8 o'clock they are hired to cart purchases from the markets to the various shops. Then there is a brief rest at Uyeno, Kudanzaka, Yorozyo bashi, or wherever they may be, but the localities named serve as a kind of open air labour bourses. But the work done so far will not yet supply the day's needs. They tramp to the fishmarkets next therefore and pull carts to Senju, Itabashi, and Shinjiku, and other suburbs, but the day's earnings amount to 20 cents at the most, and often only to 10 cents.

A coolie who pushes behind a jinrikisha that is going up a hill only gets 1 cent,\* and the supply of

\* In Yokohama 5 cents are exacted for that performance.

food on such earnings becomes a very serious question, but these people have not learned anything else, and at their age are incapable to do so. On rainy days they have no umbrellas, and in cold weather they have to depend on sunshine for warmth (*Die Sonnenbrüder*—brothers of the sun—in Berlin are a similar class of people). But these coolies do not beg, or depend upon the charity of others, nor are they rogues. They have a sturdy sense of independence and it is a pity that such good material is wasted in such unprofitable work. In all class of society men sometimes find themselves at loggerheads with the world and make up their minds to go their own way. It may be a lonely way and a rough way, but it gives men a sense of self-reliance and independence which those who swim with the stream never know. Some are provoked at the inhumanity of their landlords who own the few cheap boards that shelter them from the weather; some at the oppression of their employers, whilst some have separated from uncongenial wives. Then, when the house has been given up to the landlord; the employer told that his man wishes to be free, and the wife that she must shift for herself, resolutions are formed to have more of the world's comforts and pleasures. But poor men have nothing but their bodies to enter upon the campaign, every coin is encircled by a fort, and the larger the coin the stronger the fort, outside of which they are assailed by hunger and cold and wants of all kinds, and there are neither friends nor relations to help them, for the friends and relations of the poor are as poor as they are themselves. Thus the years roll on, a day's comfort has to be purchased by a day's

suffering, there is never any surplus. Success day by day gets further out of reach, and health and strength suffer in the ceaseless struggle. Fraud and vulgarity prosper and the sight of such prosperity increases the bitterness of the honest struggle for a mouthful of bread. Former hopes and plans have scarcely left a memory of them, and the brightest light that falls on such lives is that of the sun of the day that ends them. Supposing there were no ships we should have to swim to Russia for a bottle of oil. How then do the people of Tokyo in the 16 square miles of which there is not a single farm get such a cheap and plentiful supply of vegetables? Simply through the labourers who carry them to the markets, and yet they are always called beggars and loafers as though they were quite useless in the world. A load of about 80 kwan (about 666 lbs.) is pulled to the markets from distant villages for only 8 cents, and 8 cents will buy 13 cucumbers, or 20 egg plants, and how could they be sold so cheaply if the cost of transportation was not so low. When you see those coolies by the wayside therefore, cold and hungry, think that some of the money in your pockets is theirs, and that it has been withheld from them. There are elaborate codes with long chapters on the law of property, but the titles of the poor to their property are nevertheless determined by the law of the stronger. The dollar has the cent for ever at its mercy, for the cent has no reserves and one lost battle decides the campaign.

#### CAVE DWELLERS.

In the course of my peripatetic studies at the University of Poverty I once became partner of a pedlar. Our stock of merchandise consisted of salt

mackerel, dried cuttle-fish, salmon trout, dried codfish on skewers, called *bo dara*, and with this we started for Chichibu, a town nearly 40 miles from Tokyo, but, selling our goods as we went along, we had sold nearly all when we got to Omiya, where we dissolved partnership, and I then entered into company with a dealer in glassware. After passing through many places we finally reached Ikao, a place celebrated for its hot springs. Ikao, being situated in the mountains, the houses are built on the slopes, so that the door of one house is often higher than the roof of the next. The lanes are narrow and are practically flights of stone steps. Hotels and restaurants occupy the upper portion of the village site, and all manner of shops and stores which supply the wants of travellers, the lower portion. The place has several hundreds of houses and some of the hotels can accommodate from two to three hundred guests. Many of the houses in the lower portion are so situated that the inmates never see the sun, and some even live in cellars made under the houses from which steps lead to the surface. Those cellars have an area of about ten or twelve mats. The walls are covered with boards, through the seams and cracks of which penetrates a rank and unwholesome vegetation that poisons the air with noxious odours. Who lives in those cellars, you ask. Those who must, those to whom air and light are unattainable luxuries. There are the blind and the dumb, and cripples of all kinds, and many of them live by performing amusing tricks for visitors whose means allow them to chose the air which they wish to breathe. Some of these cave dwellers of our era play musical instruments, others are shampooers; *hari isha*, that is they cure complaints by acupuncture,

and others still are *kyu isha*, who cure by the application of moxa. Amongst them there were also a lame man who hobbles along on his hands, a big monk whose eyes have been injured so that they look like oysters and who has a wen like a potato on his forehead ; a hunchback ; a sufferer from from elephantiasis, a dwarf, and other stepchildren of nature who have found a last retreat there. Five, six, or even seven people, live together in these dark cellars, but, since most of them are blind, it makes no difference to them. Altogether there are about one hundred and fifty, and they have a chief to whom all render obedience. The chief, when I visited the place, was a queer looking old man, with a wen of the size of a man's fist on his left temple, who was a *hari isha*. He had a wife and three concubines, they were all blind and their ages ranged from 25 to 41 years. They attend upon him when he has his meals and the whole tribe honour him like a king and pay tribute to him. If any one conceals his earnings the chief chastises him severely. He does not allow strangers to settle and to do business, and all rights and powers seem to be vested in him, no one precisely knows why. Reports are made to him of all that happens, he knows whether there are many guests in the hotels or not, whether they spend much money or not, who, the people are that are staying at the different hotels, and so forth. The tribute paid to him amounts to several hundred dollars during the summer so that he is quite wealthy. To the small shopkeepers in the place he lends money at high interest, and if the money is not promptly repaid the chief sends out blind shampooers every two hours to his debtor to give him an account of what money is taken in the

shop. The blind harem also goes out to earn money for him. What has this man done then to distinguish him from other people?

Nothing but to spy out the weakness of others, and if a man knows how he may harm two people, the third will but rarely put him to the test whether he may hurt him too, for the two act as his jackals and will help to bring others in his power also. Human society has its cripples everywhere, and the most unscrupulous one amongst them who is neither ashamed nor afraid to parade his deformities will cove the rest, who will hunt for carcasses for him to prey upon.

#### COOLIE MASTERS.

Workmen of all kinds rarely make their own agreements. A piece of work is contracted for and the contractor engages the men, keeping a certain percentage out of their wages which is often unproportionately large, especially when work is dull. Where a certain number of men have to be supplied he will put some amongst them who do not get full wages, and those are called *hichibu* or *rokubu ninsoku*, that is  $7/10$  or  $6/10$  coolies, who get about that fraction of a full day's pay. The coolie masters also often keep the presents which are given upon the completion of a job.

#### CHEAP RESTAURANTS.

A house in Muro machi, san chome; a house in Utagawa cho, Shiba, and a house in Ageba cho, Ushigome, are the most celebrated cheap restaurants, and the daily returns in them amount to \$35 to \$40.

The patrons of these restaurants are mostly small merchants and workmen a little better off than coolies. The average amount of the bills for one guest is 8 or

9 sen, and for 15 or 16 sen there is quite a feast. For that sum three bottles of saké are furnished, a dish of *sashimi*, that is slices of raw fish served with horse radish and soy, a cup of bean soup and a dish of boiled fish. Restaurants for labourers and *jiniki-sha* coolies, if they are prosperous, employ two cooks, three waiters and a general assistant. The mistress of the house keeps the accounts and lends a helping hand wherever it is necessary, whilst the master goes to the markets and does outside work. The daily sales in these restaurants amount to about \$20. Everything is clean and neat in them, but from them to the lowest of their class there are but various degrees of uncleanness and dirt. There are narrow sloppy yards, garbage heaps, choked up drains, low roofs, broken windows and everything is pervaded by an evil, pestilential smell. The mistress of the house goes about with unkempt hair and looks like a ghost, the maids look dirty, the daughter or the mother is perhaps sick abed, and all day long there is no end of brawling of loafers and rogues. The price of food is low in these eating houses and the profits small, but the quantity makes up for it. A basket full of entrails of sharks is bought for 30 sen and when cut up and cooked it will make a hundred portions which bring in a dollar.\* The head of a big tunny fish sells at 50 or 60 sen and will bring in about 3 *yen*, prepared in various ways, but there is not so much profits on small fish. In prosperous restaurants no profits are charged on rice, but only the cost of cooking it.

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\* Tripe, which boiled with a little spice, marjoran and an onion or two, makes a very nutritious and savoury dish, costs only from 2 to 3 *sen* a pound, but it does not seem to be known to the Japanese as an article of food.



The rice supplied in the lower class of restaurants of course corresponds with the establishment in quality, and so do the vegetables and the way of cooking, plenty of red pepper being used to disguise any unpleasant taste.\* *Fugu*, a fish that is often poisonous, is sold very cheap, in spite of its fine flavour, as many people are afraid to eat it.

#### THE GUESTS OF AN IZAKAYA.

The saké shops called *izakaya*, in which, next to the low restaurants, labourers spend most of their money, in addition to saké, also sell cooked food. The Japanese having no round measures of capacity saké is sold in square wooden measures and many drink from them without pouring the saké into the little saucers or cups from which it is usually drunk. On rainy days these places are crowded with jinrikisha coolies and others who make their living out of doors, so that there is a constant stream of small coin flowing in, for this class of customers will spend all they have. Life to them is a cycle of days that have no connection with one another, the world in which they live in is born and dies once every twenty-four hours. The favorite drink in winter is *shiro-uma* (white horse) a strong kind of cheap saké, and in summer *shōchu*, a strong alcoholic liquor which is distilled from the dregs of saké breweries, and coolies often drink six or seven bottles at the time, a bottle

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\* The *Volksküchen* (Peoples' kitchens) in Berlin in which benevolent ladies do the cooking, and which charge no profits, furnish an excellently cooked dish of anything for 5 cents (10 pfennig) and two dishes are amply sufficient for a moderate appetite. In other popular restaurants three or four well-cooked dishes and a cup of good coffee are served for 25 cts. (50 pf.) and these restaurants are extensively patronized by students, small officials and clerks. The really cheap restaurant, is therefore still unknown in Japan.

holding about half a pint or a little more perhaps. When coolies make much money much of it is spent in saké as a matter of course, but vexation at earning no money is an equally good pretext, and then everything that can be pawned is pawned and the proceeds are spent in saké. A small dish of cooked food only costs half a cent, and that makes the saké go down with all the more relish. There is an unfortunate satisfaction with things as they are, no ambition, no desire beyond the satisfaction of gross animal wants, a full belly and a head from which drink has banished every care are the apotheosis of the day. The "white horse" carries away all that may interfere with the pleasures of the moment, and those pleasures are limited to eating and drinking and coarse jest. The "white horse" brewers therefore drive a flourishing trade, for there is no end to the demand for cheap strong drink, and to the coolie *shiro-uma* or *shochu* are combinations of meat, drink, medicine, and all that makes life enjoyable or bearable, and they have no strength without it. That at least is what they think, and that foolish creed is not limited to Japanese coolies; in England, for instance, a high degree of happiness of that kind is described by the phrase "as drunk as a lord."

#### JINRIKISHA MEN AT NIGHT.

The jinrikisha coolie who works at night is called a *yonashi* by his fellows, that is a night worker. Some of these leave their homes in the evening and work till 1 a.m. and others are out all night, and there are about 4,000 of them about every night. The pay is of course higher than during the day, and there is often a chance for extra high pay. Sometimes

people are called out on urgent business in the night, and there are also thieves who want to get away quickly from the scene of their activity, and such fares are called "good game." For such game the *yonashi* are for ever on the look-out. They principally gather at Shimbashi station, Kyo bashi, Megane bashi, Ryogoku bashi, Kaminari mon maye and similar centers of traffic, and last, but not least at the gates of the various Yoshiwaras and the Geisha quarters, whose patrons do not haggle about the jinrikisha hire, although when it rains or snows the coolies ask pretty much what they like, and they mostly exact and get a commission besides. The old hands at this kind of work therefore look out for no other and often make 50 *sen* in an hour.

#### JINRIKISHA COOLIES.

The chapters to which we come now give some details of the lives of jinrikisha coolies which however may be summed up in the words that they will work no more than they absolutely must, and that they spend all they earn, knowing no other than mere animal wants. In Tokyo there are 60,000 jinrikisha and at least a corresponding number of jinrikisha coolies, that is an army of men who are withdrawn from all productive work, and about 40,000 of them are at work every day, whilst 20,000 will be idle, allowing for change in individuals, all the year round. Supposing one coolie earns only 25 *sen* per day, 40,000 will earn \$10,000 per day, so that the Tokyo people pay them from \$300,000 to \$310,000 per month. There are 1,500,000 people in Tokyo who consume \$30,000 of rice per day, so that one-third of that sum goes to the ever present coolie. People

may not want to ride, but the coolies crowd around them and make them take a jinrikisha whether they will or not. The tram cars are looked upon as enemies, but they take only \$350 in a day and all other vehicles drawn by horses about \$1000, so that not much difference is made. The coolies nevertheless hate them and would raise a rebellion to destroy them but for want of a leader and the consequent impossibility of concerted action. If the receipts of the tramcars, however, were to show an increase to say \$5,000 per day, there is no telling what might happen. The coolies at the Shimbashi station have to deposit \$20.- security for their stand, and others are not allowed to take fares there. It is evident that from this army of jinrikisha coolies at least one half must be able-bodied men, and, from what the author has told us about the coolies who follow other occupations, it is safe to assume that there are as many, so that in the capital of Japan we have an army of 60,000 strong coolies who would at any time be ready to follow any leader who promises them an improvement of their condition, that is more money for less work, and it is equally safe to assume that there are at least 60,000 more coolies of inferior phisic but able and willing enough to join in any disturbance and to do mischief. The silent pressure of this large body of coolies in the capital, superior in numbers to the regular army of Japan, upon legislation and all public affairs must not be underrated by foreign governments and by foreigners in Japan. It is one with which the Japanese Government must reckon, and with which, if there is any danger of its exercise in any particular direction, it must temporize, for it must always be remembered that this amorphous

mass of humanity that has nothing to lose and everything to gain, and to which even a week's ease and dissipation would be sufficient inducement to risk its life, is at least capable of organisation and direction. The first barricade built in the narrow streets and lanes of Tokyo would be an event whose consequences are incalculable.

#### GIRLS IN LOW RESTAURANTS.

Generally servant girls in Tokyo receive \$1.50 a month and board and lodging, and two suits of clothing a year, one at the end of June and one at the end of December. Their ages vary between 15 and 20 years and some are stronger than men. In the low restaurants they lead a pretty hard life, their work being two or three times harder than that of other servants and much more disagreeable. The guests are evil-smelling coolies, but the girls have to attend on them and clean all the dishes, chop-sticks, cups and bottles, many times a day. They have to get up early and work hard whether it is hot or cold, and if you look at their frost-bitten, chapped hands you get an idea of their work. At nights, when the guests are all gone, they are huddled together in a room of two or three mats in size, where they have hardly room to stir, so that their natural growth is injured. Toil all day, irregular meals and living in low damp rooms also injure their growth. So some grow very stout, some very thin, some get short-necked and long-legged like figures in funny pictures, and some have childish faces although they are over 30 years of age. Occasionally, however, you may meet one amongst them of refined features and language, so that you wonder how she got there. But there is the same slavery for all, from which

there is no escape but the scarcely less irksome slavery of marriage, that is, even in the most favorable case, to be taken up by some man until he gets tired of his uncomplaining servant.

#### DAY LABOURERS.

In Tokyo day labourers mostly live in the outskirts of the city, and in each of the 15 districts of Tokyo five or six hundred labourers can be raised at any time, so that eight or nine thousand labourers can be had at short notice. They work under leaders called *oyakata*, and if a leader has 40 or 50 men under him he is much respected. Contractors of work make their arrangements with these leaders and sometimes the latter make their own contracts. At large funerals fifteen hundred men are often wanted at the same time, and if two or three large funerals fall on the same day the majority of the Tokyo labourers are engaged. The lives of these men scarcely offer room for a description. They herd together and spend their money in debauchery, drinking and gambling without a single thought to the future. They live and die like animals.

#### NIGHT STORES.

Night stores of all kinds prosper because the purchasing power of the poor rises at night, being 7/10 whilst in the day it is 3/10, as the wage earners bring home their day's earnings at night and the wives then go out to make purchases. Prices too are cheaper at night, a newspaper, for instance, that costs 1½ *sen* in the morning only costs 8 or 5 *rin* in the evening and when the night is well advanced three papers sell for 1 *sen*. The market price of vegetables which is fixed at 8 o'clock in the morning

falls 20% by 10 a.m. and at 11.30 a.m. it is only half of what it was in the morning, and the same is the case with fish. The large day stores supply the night stores with their left-over stock at low rates and hence trade in the night stores is brisk. There is so little in a great city for which its poor have not some use. But the poor do not go shopping, they buy what they must have and then go home, for the night passes quickly and the weary body requires rest.

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Here the book ends. There is no romance in it, for the lives of the poor are bare of romance and move between hunger and thirst, but we have seen those lives as they are, we have seen them in their squalor, in their thriftlessness and shiftlessness, each day closing accounts with itself, carrying nothing forward to the morrow. The family, the foundation of the state in Europe, is a bare academical conception that the whim or the necessity of the moment may destroy, a mere convenience, an experiment, the result of mating, but not of marrying. The house is a mere shelter, essentially a roof, and hence perhaps the Japanese carpenter constructs the roof first, and then turns to the less essential remainder of it. A fire sweeps away thousands of such houses, there is a brief inconvenience, many lose their accustomed shelter, but no one loses a *home*, and hence the house as a *home* is unknown to Japanese law. Its average life is only seven years, within those seven years it tumbles to pieces or is eaten up by the fire demon. No one grows up in it, no one who has grown up ever expects to revisit the house in which he was born, in which perhaps a loved mother or father died. The house

is merely a sort of an outer garment that has to be put on at night, and since it does not pinch anywhere one is as good as another. Can such houses, we must ask ourselves, be productive of domestic virtues. We think not, not amongst the lower orders at least, to whom a home and a wife are only temporary necessities of the same order as meals or bottles of saké. The lower orders of Japan, therefore, simply drift from one day into the next, and one must know this slow irresponsible mass to appreciate and to understand the overwhelming difficulties with which the leading men of Japan, such as Ito, Inoue, Yamagata, Matsukata, and others have had to contend to raise Japan to the position in the world she now occupies, and how much it will cost to maintain that position, if it can be maintained with the stubborn material that is at their disposition. The coming into force of the new treaties and the conflicts they will accentuate, instead of ending, may tax the powers of those intellectual giants of Japan beyond endurance, and with all due regard to the fact that the world will not stand still if they die, as sometime they must, none of those who have passed into and out of the Cabinet with them seem to have been able to establish themselves as quantities of fixed and known political or international value that could be, or have to be, reckoned with.

There are things which nations create as they grow others which they acquire by exchange, and a small percentage of things that have to be borrowed or purchased. As regards Japan, owing to her long voluntary isolation, much of that which she had created became of no use when the barriers fell, much



had to be remodeled, and the little that remained could not fill the blanks in the nation's life. Japan then began to borrow and to purchase, but purchases, intellectual or otherwise, that should have been made in instalments spread over centuries, had to be crowded into a generation. And it must be said to the credit of the Japanese Government, that no excessive amount of money or energy was spent upon useless acquisitions. The actual loss indeed would perhaps be no more than any practical business must be prepared to incur, and so far as assets in the nation's books are concerned, they are amply met by the very substantial advantages gained. But Japan has only a limited purchasing power, and national interests, internal consolidation, education, the creation of an army of reliable and responsible officials, the backbone of the constitutional state, all these have been sacrificed to the craving for an international position, to national vanity, and we fear that Japan will have to pay the penalty. No one may speak or write an honest word that criticises the fancy of the hour without being accused of hostility against Japan. Flattery, however gross or insincere, is demanded of any one who wishes to be considered a friend of Japan, the Government itself has set the example by hiring venal foreign writers to expound its desires and views, and the smell of the official loves and fishes has attracted others. But under the surface there is the Japan as described "IN DARKEST TOKYO," the Japan with which the Government must reckon, the unreasoning pressure of the unintellectual bulk that changes every twenty-four hours, both in direction and intensity, and that may change and from no

apparent cause gain a hundredfold strength at any one of the twenty-four hours. And science has as yet invented no instrument to fathom its mysteries. It is a nightmare that oppresses every statesman of Japan, this many-headed hydra of the mob; may it never hear the maddening cry "*à la lanterne!*"



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SECRETARY:	F. SCHROEDER.	
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*Dr. Koide will attend the office every afternoon, and in the absence Mr. F. Schroeder will receive clients, both foreign and Japanese, who may wish to bring cases in Japanese Courts, or foreign Consular Courts, as the case may be, or who may have other legal business to transact.*

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