R. Ellis, Robert.

THROUGH THE TORII

"I do not know whether the essay is a Japanese literary form, but if it is not Mr. Noguchi has perfectly realised its possibilities, and has used it in a manner which makes our most delicate masters seem rather heavy-handed. For Mr. Noguchi, though he has lived much in England and America, and knows English literature well, has accepted nothing from the West which might spoil his native virtues. . . Himself we may describe—not necessarily exhaustively—as a mystical dandy."—FRANCIS BICKLEY IN THE BOOKMAN (London).

"Noguchi's essays leave one advanced in a conception of beauty, and enlarged in understanding; and that is not altogether familiar experience in bookreading."—THE ACADEMY.

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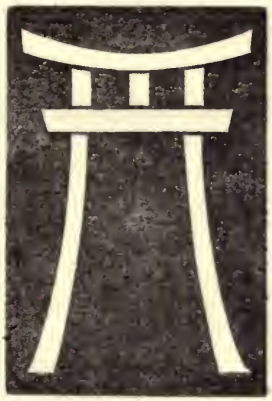
THROUGH THE TORII

BY

YONE NOGUCHI



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TO
EDMUND GOSSE

CONTENTS

KYOTO

THE noisy time has slipped away even gracefully at Kyoto. (I see that it—the barbarian of modern type—has still a certain amount of etiquette in Japan.) Content is so natural and even becoming here (at other places it is almost outlandish and at the same time the most expensive thing to acquire), when one passes through the dustless streets of Kyoto, where the little houses with moss-eaten dark tiles humbly beg for their temporary existence on promise not to disturb the natural harmony with the green mountains and the temples that the holy spirits built. How different from the foreign houses, red or white, seeming even to push away the old-fashioned Nature with vain splenduor of scorn. The Kyoto people, the moth-spirits or butterfly-ghosts, are born for pleasure-making, and to sip the tea. I say pleasure-making, but not in the modern meaning; the modern pleasure-making is rather a forced production of criticism, therefore often oppressive and always explanatory in attitude. I say they sip the tea; I do not mean the black

tea or the red tea which the Western people drink, calling it Oriental tea; but I mean that pale green tea, so mild that it does not kill the taste of boiled water. It is the high art of the tea-master to make you really taste the water beside the taste of the tea; he is very particular about the water when he is going to make the tea; I am told that his keen tongue at once differentiates the waters from a well or a stream, and he can distinguish even the season from the taste of the water, whether it be spring or autumn. He always laughs at the attempt to make tea with the ready water from a screw in the kitchen, which most unpoetically comes through the tube from a certain reservoir. We do not call you a real tea-drinker when you think you only drink the tea; you must really taste the fragrance and spirits of tender leaves of a living tea-tree, which grew by accident and fortune under a particular sunlight and rain. And, of course, more than that, you must learn how to sip the tea philosophically; I mean that you must taste, through the medium of a teacup, the general atmosphere, grey and silent. And there is no better place

than Kyoto, the capital of the mediæval, to drink tea as a real tea-sipper.

A few days ago I enjoyed a little play (comedy, but poetry), "Sakura Shigure," or "The Cherry-blossom Shower," by my friend Gekko Takayasu—the play is the love between Yoshino and Saburobei. Yoshino was a courtesan of four or five hundred years ago—of course, not in the modern sense, but a type which the Tosa school artists were happy to paint, the most famous beauty of that age whose name was known even to China, although it was the age of isolation. It is said that Li Shozan, the Chinese poet, sent her a poem written on his meeting with her in a dream. It is written in Okagami: "Her temperament was sprightly; she was wise. Her charming spirit was impressive; she was at once free in disposition, and again sympathetic in feeling." Yoshino was a rare personality; and it was the age when dignity and freedom were well protected even for a courtesan; in truth, she was in no way different from the maiden at a palace of the Heian period. Yoshino was a character which only the

Kyoto atmosphere and culture could create, and I congratulate the dramatist Takayasu, whose perfect assimilation with Kyoto made him able to produce this play. The play opens with the scene where Yoshino is leaving the house of pleasure with her lover, Saburobei, who has been disinherited by his wealthy family on her account, only to find the real meaning of life and love. The story is interesting; but I am not going to tell it, as it is not the very point for my purpose.

The second scene is a cottage, wretched but artistic, as the inmates are Yoshino and her husband. I see in the background the mountains of Higashi Yama, Kiyomizu, and Toribe, to whose protection Kyoto, whom I love, clings with almost human passion. The house is wretched, but the presence of Yoshino —now housewifely, but having an unforgotten glimmer of gaiety of her past life, makes the whole atmosphere perfectly tantalising. The season is autumn (Kyoto's autumn sweet and sad); the leaves fall. And again, as the season is autumn, we have at Kyoto a frequent shower, as we see it on the stage presently;

and that shower, light but very lonesome, is necessary, as it made Shoyu, father of Saburobei, of course a stranger, find his shelter under Yoshino's roof. Yoshino welcomed him in, and offered him a cup of tea. He was taken to admiration while he looked on her way to make tea, as he was no mean tea-master. He became on the spot an unconditional admirer of his forgotton son's wife, whom he had cursed and despised without any acquaintance. I said already that you should come to Kyoto to drink tea; I say again that even at Kyoto you must drink it while listening to the voice of rain; better than that, of the autumnal shower, sad but musical, which is spiritual, therefore Oriental. It is the keynote of the tea, of the old capital of Japan, and again my friend's play. What happens next when Shoyu finds in Yoshino a tea-drinker, and an admirable woman, too, would be, I believe, the next question you will ask me. It is prosaic to answer it, and it will end as any other comedy always ends. And it would be better to make it end as you please; that is not the real point. The main thing is the tea

and the autumnal shower, the soul of poetry that is Kyoto.

You are bound to be sad sooner or later in Tokyo or any other city of modern type, where you will find yourself as a straying ghost in a human desert; there the dream would die at once as a morning glory under the sunlight. While I admit that the weariness is, in fact, the highest poetry of the Eastern nature, I will say that Tokyo's weariness is a kind that has lost beauty and art; and the weariness at Kyoto is a kind that has soared out of them. That is the difference; but it is a great difference. As there is the poetry of weariness at Kyoto—the highest sort of Oriental poetry—it is your responsive mind that makes you at once join with great eternity and space; it is most easy there to forget time and hours. It seems to me that nothing is more out of place at Kyoto than a newspaper. When you used to know the time of day or night you have only to wait for a temple bell to ring out; you would be more happy not to be stung by the tick-tack of clock. Sanyo Rai, the eminent scholar of some sixty years ago, wrote an

invitation to his friend saying that he would expect him to come "at the time when the mountain grows purple and the water clear." Indeed, it is the very hour of autumn evening at Kyoto where Nature presents the varied aspect by which you can judge the exact time. By the mountain, Rai means Higashi Yama; by the water, of course, Kamo Gawa. It is the happy old city, this Kyoto, whose poetical heart exchanges beauty and faith with Nature. It is only here, even in Japan, that Nature is almost human, like you and me.

NIKKO

It is difficult to take a neutral attitude towards the temples at Nikko, although indifference is said to be the "highest" of Japanese attitudes; I mean there are only two ways—like or dislike—for their barbarous splendour in gold and red lacquer deprived of the inspiration of the imagination and melancholy, definite to the limit. And it altogether depends on one's mood; if a man's large stomach is well filled (also his purse), their despotic wealth would not be too overwhelming, and he might even be disposed to sing their eternal beauty as the ultimate achievement of human endeavour. I believe I have been sometimes in such a state myself. But the pessimistic mind, critical even where criticism is not called for, skipping all the physical expression for the spiritual communication, will find Nikko a sad dilettantism of art, at the best a mere apology of a squandering mind; there is nothing more unhappy than wastefulness in the orld of art. It is not the real Japanese mind, I think, to build a house for the dead, as I know that it goes

straight towards associating the dead with trees, mountains, water, winds, shadows, deer, ravens, foxes, wolves, and bears, and uses to leave them to the care of the sun and moon; indeed, it was the unlettered *samurai* mind to build such temples as I see at this Nikko, afraid to return to the gray elements and wishing to find a shelter even after death in materialism. Or it might be more true to say that it originated in the complete surrender to Buddhism; and it may not be too much to say that India begins right here from Nikko, in the same sense that Tokyo of the present age is spiritually a part of London or New York. We have only a few pages in the whole Japanese history where we are perfectly independent.

Whether it is fortunate or not, my recent evolution of mind is that I have ceased to see the fact itself, and what I am glad to indulge in is the reflection of its psychological relation with other facts; how thankful I am for the gate tower carved with phœnixes and peonies, the large pagoda in red and gold, now loitering round the holy precincts of the Nikko temples, since the very fact of their existence makes,

through the virtue of contrast, the cryptomerias and mountains greener, the waters and skies bluer, and besides, the human soul intenser. I am happy in my coming to Nikko in the month of May when the beauty of Nature quickens itself from the pain of passing Spring, and with the sunlight that overflows from the bosom of hope; your appreciation of Nikko would not be perfect till you see the wealth and grandeur of Nature's greenness; it is the beauty of cryptomerias and waters rather than that of the temples. And you will feel encouraged when you observe the real fact, how even the barbarity of human work can calm down before Nature, and happier still how they can form a good friendship with one another for creating the one perfect art known as Nikko. I am glad to see the proof of power of a Japanese landscape artist who could use his art on a large scale as I see it here, not merely in a small city garden; my mind, which was slightly upset from the artistic confusion of the temples belonging to Iyeyasu the Great, soon recovered its original serenity in seeing the most beautiful arrangement of temples of Iyemitsu, the Third

Shogun of Tokugawa family, with the hills and trees, quite apart from his grandfather's; what a gentle feeling of solemnity, as old as that of a star, what a quiet and golden splendour here! The arrangement might be compared with the feminine beauty of gems most carefully set. When I looked upon the temples from the Mitarashiya, or the "House where you wash your Honourable Hands," below, they impressed my mind as if a house of dream built by the Dragon Kings underneath the seas, that I and you often see on the Japanese fan; I looked down, when I stood by the gate tower of the Niwo gods, over that water-fountain below, where the spirits of poesy were soon floating on the sunlight; it was natural to become a passionate adorer of the Nature of May here like Basho, who wrote in his seventeen syllable *hokku*:

Ah, how sublime—
The green leaves, the young leaves,
In the light of the sun!

I very well understand how Iyeyasu, the Supreme Highness, Lord of the East, that

Great Incarnation, escaped the temple of gold and red lacquer, and wished to sleep in a hill behind, in silence, and shadow; now I am climbing up the long and high steps to make him my obeisance where a hundred large cryptomerias stand reverent as sentinels. What peace! What broke the silence was the sudden voice of water and the sutra-reading of priests; a moment ago the crows in threes, twos, and fours flew away and dropped into the unseen just like the human mortals who have only to stay here for a little while. Under my feet I found a small hairy caterpillar also climbing up the stone steps like myself. Oh! tell me who art thou? And what difference is there between us human beings and the caterpillar? Are we not caterpillar who may live little longer? But I tell you that is a difference of no particular value. I met with a group of Western tourists in the middle of the steps, who hurried down; they set my mind thinking on the anti-Christian terrorism of Iyeyasu and other princes, the Japanese Neroes, awful and glorious. It is not strange that they are shaking hands in sleep with

the Westerners whom they hated with all their hearts?

The words of my friend when I bade farewell to him in New York suddenly returned to me when now the weather has changed, and even rain has begun to fall; my friend artist who had stayed and sketched here long ago said to me: "There were many idols of the Jizo god, the guardian deity of children, standing by the Daiyagawa River of Nikko; I loved them, particularly one called the Father or Mother, from its large size, whom I sketched most humbly. You see that Nantai Mountain appears and disappears as if mist or mirage, right behind these idols; the place is poetical. But they seemed to be having a disagreeable time of it, all overgrown as they were with moss, and even with the dirty pieces of paper stuck by all sorts of pilgrims as a sign of their call. Once when I hurried down from Chuzenji and passed by them, I caught rain and wind; alas! those kind deities were terribly wet, like myself. I pitied them; I cannot forget their sad sight even to-day; however, the Jizo idol under the rain is a good subject of art.

There are few countries where rain falls as in Japan. The dear idols must be wet under the rain even now while you and I talk right here."

When I reached my hotel and sat myself on the cushion, and after a while began to smoke, my mind roamed leisurely from the idols under the rains to the man wet through by the rains of failure; and now it reflected on this and that, and then it recalled that and this. Oh, how can I forget the very words of that reporter of one Francisco paper who mystified, startled, and shocked me, well, by his ignorance or wisdom seven years ago? I said to him on being asked why I returned home that I was going to hunt after the Nirvana; he looked up with a half-humorous smile and said, "That's so! But let me ask you with pardon, are you not rather too late in the season for that?"

It seems that it is too late now even in Japan to get the Nirvana, as that San Francisco reporter said. How can I get it, the capital-lettered Nirvana, even at Nikko, when I could not find it in London and New York? I laughed on my silliness of thought that I might

be able, if place were changed, to discover it. Oh, my soul, I wonder when it will wiser grow?

TOKYO

PSYCHOLOGICALLY speaking, the city of Tokyo, like the Japanese civilization, which is often unmoral, if not immoral, is a wanton growth, not a true development from the inner force of impulse; its immensity in size, and perhaps in humanity too, is not the consciousness of sure development, but more or less in the nature of an accidental phenomenon. It appeared like a mushroom without any particular reason; the wonder is that it has stayed, and grown bigger and bigger. It fairly well represents the Japanese mind in its incapacity for spiritual concentration; if it have any charm (it has, in fact, many and many charms, often fantastic and always bewildering) it should lie in its ignoring of definite purpose, or its utter lack of purpose. It is almost too free to be called democratic; it has no discrimination. (My friend critic, that unique N. Y., scorns Tokyo as the human beehive of mobbishness.) Many millions of Japanese, dark in skin, short in stature, live here looking as if the increasing summer clouds had fallen on the ground, now

parting and anon gathering again with a sort of mystery of Oriental fatalism; the first and last impression is a weariness not altogether unpleasant, ghostly at the beginning and tantalisingly human afterward. That weariness originates in the confusion, physical and spiritual, to speak symbolically, the strange mess of red, blue, yellow, green, and what not. (Fame be eternal of Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige, those colour magicians of art, the true exponents of Japanese life!)

This Tokyo was at the first the town of *samurai* of two swords, of mind more bent on learning how to die than how to live, proper to say, founded by Iyeyasu Tokugawa, the mighty prince of the Tokugawa feudalism, four hundred year ago, whose want of artistic education made it quite natural for him not to see the poetical side of city-building; he allowed every whim and imagination of the people to take their own free course. This neglect, more fortunate than otherwise, produced a great variety in colour and humanity that system and wisdom never could create, that were at once paradoxical, but highly interesting.

It is for ever the man's city, if we can call Kyoto the city of women for the sake of comparison; in consequence, it is apt to be naked, *bizarre* and often arrogant, but there is no other city like Tokyo, which is honest and simple. As a piece of the art the city is sadly unfinished; in its unfinishedness we feel a charm, as I said before, the charm of weariness that rather breaks, in spite of itself, an artistic unity. Consciousness of perfection is unknown to the city; while it is quick and bright on the one hand, it is, on the other, verily lazy and uncivilised, like the Japanese temperament itself. I can count, on the spot, many a street which raises an apologetic look, as if they did not approve their own existence even themselves; it is quite natural, I say, as it is the city as a whole, withuot a definite purpose.

I think that "New Japan" (what a skeptic shallow sound it has!) has little to do with the real Japan of human beauty, because it was created largely by the advertisement, for which we paid the most exorbitant price to get the mere name of that; in short, we bought it with ready cash. Therefore it is no wonder that it

is so perfectly strange to many of us. I hear a whisper too often at some street corner: "Is it really our Japan?" I know that old true Japan, every inch of it, was the very handiwork of the people in general, while "New Japan," "the rising country of first class in the world," as it was proudly written by a newspaper man, as I can imagine, who wears a single eyeglass straight from London, was created by a few hundred men, we might say, the Westerners born in Japan, whose hopeless ignorance of the old civilization of their old country, strange to say, helped them up to fill the highest place in the public estimate. They were almost reckless to bring everything from abroad, good or bad; we did not mind trying it under one condition, that we might change it for another if it was not fitting. We discovered profitably Shakespeare and even Ibsen lately; and it seems to me that a copy, doubtless, of the American edition of "How to Build a City" fell one day in the hands of the Mayor of Tokyo, who proclaimed in the voice of a prophet that the city should be rebuilt in the very fashion nobody, at least in

the Orient, ever dreamed. Figuratively speaking, we were changing our *kimono* of old brocade, precious with tradition, for a plain sack-coat, perhaps made in Chicago. The municipality has been for the last two or three years spending an enormous amount of money for the sudden enlarging of the streets, and the hasty building of houses of brick or stone, of white or red; but I wonder why our Japanese city should be one and the same with that of the West. And again I wonder if it was her weakness or strength that she accepted the foreign things so easily. It makes me reflect what right she has, however, to object to the foreign invasion, as she had no definite purpose as a city originally. And is it the only way to put the Western morality in the old heart of the city? Can she ever become really civilised?

THE HOLY HOUSES OF SLEEP

It has become my habit on way to college once a week, where my weakness betrays itself under the quite respectable name of interpreter of English poets, ancient or modern, to invite my own soul even for awhile where the shadows of pine-trees thicken along the path of breezes in Shiba Park; it makes my wandering in the holy houses of sleep of the great feudal princes the most natural thing. I clearly remember how afraid I was in my boyhood days, whenever I happened to pass by them, of being hailed by the dark, undiscerning voice of Death. Oh, my friends and philosophers in all lands, is it a matter of thankfulness as to-day even to fall in love with its sweetness, and to reflect on its golden-hearted generosity and accidentally to despise Life? I say here at either the sacred house of the Sixth Prince or that of the Second Prince that one cannot help loving Death when he sees right before himself such an inspiring house of sleep of green, red, yellow, of the gold and lacquer, of the colours unmixed and simple, soaring out of this and that wealth of life, the

colours that have reached the final essence, and power of Nature. Although it might be a modern fashion to speak of symbolism, I flatly refuse to look through its looking-glass of confused quality, on the phœnixes, paradise-birds, lotuses, peonies, lions, and ocean waves which decorate the inside of the temple, where the years of incense and prayer have darkened and mystified the general atmosphere. Our old artists had a strength in their jealous guarding of beauty for beauty's sake; they felt but not theorised; therefore, in such a beauty of confusion as I see in these holy temples, there is the most clear simplicity, the beauty of the last judgment. Indeed, I wish to know if there is any house better fitting for sleep and rest than the temples of spirit in my beloved Shiba Park.

The beauty of Death is in its utter rejection of profusion; it is the desire of intensity itself which only belongs to the steadfastness and silence of a star; oh, what a determination it declares! It is perfect; its epical perfection arises from the point that it will never return towards Life; its grandeur is in the pride that it

shall never associate itself with life's clatter. Oh, Death is triumph! It is the great aspect of Japanese romance of the fighting age to make the moment of death as beautiful as possible; I can count a hundred names of heroes and fighters whom we remember only from the account of their beautiful death, not of their beautiful lives, on whom stories and dramas have been gorgeously written. And it was the civilisation of the Tokugawa feudalism, the age of peace, to make us look upon Death with artistic adoration and poetical respect. We read so much in our Japanese history of the powers and works of that Tokugawa family, which lasted with untired energy until only forty years ago; oh, where to-day can the strong proof of its existence be traced? Is it not, I wonder, only a "name written on water"? But the great reverence towards Death that it encouraged will be still observed like the sun or moon in the holy temples at Nikko or Shiba Park, the creations of art it realised during the long three hundred years. True to say, art lives longer than life and the world.

I often think how poor our Japanese life might have been if we had not developed, by accident or wisdom, this great reverence towards Death, without whose auspices many beautiful shapes of art, I am sure, would never have existed; the stone lantern for instance, to mention a thing particularly near my mind when I loiter alone in the sacred ground of the Second Shogun, in the wide open yard perfectly covered by pebbles in the first entrance-gate, where hundreds of large stone lanterns stand most respectfully in rows; quite proper for the feudal age, those lone sentinels. When the *toro* or stone lantern leaves the holy place of spirit for the garden, matter-of-fact and plebeian, it soon assumes the front of pure art; but how can it forget the place where it was born? We at once read its religious aloofness under the democratic mask. To see it squatting solemn and sad with the pine-trees makes me imagine an ancient monk in meditation, cross-legged, not yet awakened to the holy understanding of truth and light; is there not the attitude of a prophet crying in the wilderness in its straight, tall shape upon the large moss-

carpeted lawn? I myself have never been able to take it merely as a creation of art since my tender age when my boy's imagination took its flicker of light under the depth of darkness to be a guiding lamp for my sister's dead soul hastening towards Hades in her little steps; it was a rainy night when she died in her ninth year. I cannot separate my memory of her from the stone lantern; again, I cannot dissociate the stone lantern with the black night and autumnal rain under whose silence the lantern sadly burned, indeed, like a spirit eternal and divine.

In the first place, whenever I think of the general effect of the reverence of Death upon our national life, I deem the love of cleanliness the greatest of it; when I say that it really grew in the Tokugawa age, I have in my mind the thought that the reverence towards Death reached its full development then. When the custom of keeping the household shrine came strictly to be observed, the love of cleanliness soon promulgated itself as an important duty; and the thought of sharing the same roof with the spirit or ghost makes you, as the next thing,

wiser, not to act foolishly or talk scandalously. The appreciation of greyness and silence is born from that reverence of Death ; as you live with the dead souls in one house, Death ceases to be fearful and menacing, and becomes beautiful and suggestive like the whisper of a breeze or the stir of incense. Death is then more real than life, like that incense or breeze ; again so is silence more real than voice.

DAIBUTSU

THE valley, a snug basin forgotten by consciousness, was filled with the autumnal sunlight of gold, which shone up to the tremendous face of Daibutsu (famous holiness at Kamakura) who, like thought touched by emotion, appeared as if vibrating; Nature there was in the last stage of all evolution, having her energy and strength vaporized into repose. The trees, flowers and grasses in the sacred ground calmed down, to speak somewhat hyperbolically, into the state of Nirvana. The thought that I was a sea-tossed boat even with all oars broken, formed itself then in my mind; it was natural I felt at once that it was the only place, at least in Japan, where my sea-wounded heart would soon be healed by the virtue of my own prayer, and by the air mist-purple, filling the valley most voluptously. I cannot forget my impression when I heard there the evening bell ring out and the voice of sutra-reading from the temple, and how I lost my human heart and pride, becoming a faint soul, a streak of scent or a wisp of sigh; I was a song itself

which grew out from my confession. Such was my first impression on finding myself in Daibutsu's ground, the haven of peace and heavenly love all by itself, soon after I returned home from my long foreign sojourn, that is quite many years ago now; but it seems it was only yesterday that I, like a thousand waves hurrying towards the Yuigahama shore of Kamakura, hurried to Daibutsu with my own soul of wave-like song of prayer; can our human souls ever be more than the wave of the sea?

It was the next summer that I had many many more occasions to lay my body and soul under the blessing of Daibutsu's valley (Oh, what a scent that is the Lord Buddha's!) as I had many weeks to spend there at Kamakura; Summer, the month of my love, with the burning ecstasy that would soon be intensified into the greyness of Oriental desolation. I like the Summer heat, you understand, not from the fact of heat itself, but from the reason we have to thank its presence for the sweetening of the shadows of trees, where I will build, while looking at the delicious white feet of passing

breeze, my own kingdom with sighing, to speak plainly, dream old Kamakura of the Middle Age, that is, of art and religious faith. To-day, it is in truth a common sort of country town of modern Japan, of stereotyped pattern with others; if there is a difference, it is only in its appearing less individual and far sadder because it has had such a great history, when we observe that its general ambition now points towards commercialism; but it is during those Summer weeks only that we can fairly well connect it with the old art and prayer, let me say, with the true existence of Daibutsu the Wonder, as we see then with our living eyes the thousand pilgrims in white cotton, bamboo mushroom hats on head and holy staff in hand, and sacred little bells around their waists (what desolate voices of bells!) swarming here mainly to kneel before Daibutsu from every corner of the country where all winds come from; I was glad to see the whole town religiously changed at once. How often I found myself with those pilgrims muttering the holy words in Daibutsu's valley where the nature, not alike that of the former October of

rest, was in all its spiritual asceticism with repentance and belief; the gigantic divinity in bronze, of folded hands and inclined head in heavenly meditation, over whom time and change (Summer heat, of course) have no power to stir its silence, is self-denial itself. Oh, let my heart burn in storm and confession like the hearts of a thousand cicadas whose songs almost shake the valley and trees; we might get the spiritual ascendency out of physical exhaustion; it makes at least one step nearer our salvation. The autumnal rest or silence can only be gained after having all the summer heart-cry; isn't Daibutsu's self-denial the heart-cry strengthened into silence?

There is in this statue a great subtlety, speaking of it as a creation of art, which might result, let me define it arbitrarily, from a good balance of the masses of idealism and what we generally understand as realism; as the latter is indeed so slight, even our modern imagination whose rush always proves to be disturbing, has enough room here to play to its content. The proof that the said idealism and realism melt into one another in such a perfection is

clearly seen in its external monotony, or, let me say, in its utter sacrifice of gross effect, while it, on the other hand, has gained the inward richness most magically. To call it an accident is not quite satisfactory, although I do not know how far it is explained by saying that it is the realization of magic or power of prayer which our ancestors placed in bronze; there is no denying, I think, that it is the work of prayer to a great measure. Tradition says:

It was Itano no Tsubone, one of the waiting ladies to Shogun Yoritomo, who undertook, when he passed away with the unfulfilled desire to have an object of worship at Kamakura, his own capital, similar to the Daibutsu at Nara, to collect a general contribution and fund, with the assistance of the priest Joko; the first image which was of wood was finished in 1238 or the first year of Rekinin. She was again called to action, when in the autumn of the 2nd year of Hoji (1248) the image, also the chapel, was overthrown by a storm, this time assisted by the Shogun Prince Munetaka, she successfully restored the image in bronze.

The artist who executed it was Goyemon Ono of Yanamura of Kadzusa province.

Putting aside the question who were Ono and Itano no Tsubone, the singnificant point is that it was created by a thousand people whose religious longing and hope were fulfilled in this Daibutsu. It is not our imagination alone to think that the statue always lives as it is the real force of prayer; when we see it, we build the most musical relation one with another at once, because we forget ourselves in one soul and body, we might say, in one sound and one colour, perfectly wedded with it. After all, it is nothing but our own emotion and yearning personified.

I believe that it might not have been so great an art as it is, if it had been made in our day, mainly because it would express too delicate details; and the temple light from the opening of the doors, when it used to stand within, must have often played with it unjustly. But it became a great art when the storm and tidal waves destroyed the temple and washed the statue in 1355 and again in 1526, and left it without cover ever since, with the rus-

tling trees behind, the light and winds crawling up and down, against whose undecidedness its eternal silence would be doubly forcible. Is it not that our human souls often grow beautiful under the baptism of misfortune and grief? So Nature once unkind to the statue proves to be a blessing to-day; it looms with far greater divinity out of the rain, wind, lights of sun and moon, whose subtle contribution it fully acknowledges. Where are the foolish people who wish to build the temple again to put the image in?

SPRING IN JAPAN

IT is the Japanese imagination to make the world-large laughter of flowers out of the December snow; it is our fire of imagination that we build a land of Spring fairies already in Winter's heart of frost, and of wind · too solemn even for speech. We flatly object to recognise the existence of Winter; we are happy to think that we have only three seasons in the year. I always think the Japanese mind is most wonderful where it leaves behind the Chinese thought, finite, hard, like the Greek thought, whose consciousness to ethics ever thought a Vision frivolous; and we thank the Buddhism which encouraged our appreciation of Nature as having a big share of moral life. We read in our literature the record of a long fight of those two thoughts, Chinese and Japanese. It is originally a Chinese thought to praise and moralise over the plum-blossom; and the nightingale, speaking generally, is more a Chinese bird, or, we might say, a Greek bird, like Keats' nightingale, than a Japanese bird; but the nightingale, also the plum-

blossom, became quite Japanese things when we found in them a most feverish outburst of our desire towards Spring. We hardly think of truth and beauty as the ending words for a song on the nightingale as in Keats' ode; our mind goes straight to the irresistible impulse of the bird in leaving the deeper hills to hunt after Spring and sunlight. It is a great moment among many others when we show we are much related with the Celtic temperament; there is nothing like our Spring thought, often turbulent, ever so passionate, that we express most forcibly one of the clear national characteristics.

Outside the sky is ashen and dumb, as it is usually at the end of December; the maple-leaves sang a month ago their last farewell of glory written in blood. (What a patience and strength they saved only to reach that tragic end!) Within my room the Spring air already floods. The Chinese daffodils, aged but happy, bloom on the *tokonoma*, the holy dais, where Spring always begins first to smile; a most appropriate picture is hanged on its wall, ready to greet the approach of the New Year

in a gorgeous attire of old fashion. The fire burns in the *hibachi*, or fire-box, whispering a far-off forest story and the rustic humanity which is the best. What a country-like love in the charcoal fire! A while ago my servant boy returned home from the market where he bought the proper decoration for New Year's Day, made of straw, sea-weed, lobster (it is a Japanese allegory to have a humorous side, as, for instance, with this lobster, which represents agelessness in its very old shape of crooked back); I told him that a big pair of pine trees should be put up at the entrance of my house to create the house of evergreen Eternity. I already hear outside the merry music of lion-dancers, who make havoc among the children, whose suspicious eyes wish to know where Happy New Year ever comes. We will soon see what a great part a fan plays in our Japanese life, which will be carried by each person going round to scatter good wishes among the people known or unknown.

I will stay within the shut doors, or *shojis*, live in the Spring air of my creation after much cost, and wait for the outside Nature to burst

out in jollity; I know that then my moods will never be disturbed even when the doors of my house swing open, and the air within and without communicate with one another on equal terms. I shall see the low sky with the still lower clouds of cherry-blossoms by a stream (what a picture to please the Tosa school of artists!), and again the cherry-blossom with lanterns and jolly people in dance, which would be a subject for a Hokusai or Hiroshige. When a poet sings Spring to frighten from him the Invisible or Unseen, it is from his desire to make the affair sudden and strange, to make a mysterious world with laughter and tears arm in arm.

My Spring thought, which started more objectively, slowly entered in subjective appreciation, and my psychical quality of mind is strangely evolving in April, when I see not each shape of Spring, but the one big Vision or Imagination of all Spring now appearing, now disappearing, as one big mist, into whose seen or unknown breath my own existence will be lost; by losing myself I know I shall get a greatest joy of life. My desire will soon be

exhausted when it is filled. And I will rest in reverie.

The season, too, will rest in rain before getting another pang of force. Nature, who began as strong and objective as a Chinese art, and then turned as voluptuous and quite real as the *Shijo* art, more as our beloved *Ukiyoye* art, is now becoming the art of Korin design in the season of iris and wistaria, great Korin's favourite subjects. The Japanese nature of May is most decorative.

THE WILLOW-TREE WOMAN

THE incense, an old vibration of the Japanese heart, quite peculiar, naturally fastidious, gesticulated, while stealing up from a two-horned dragon's mouth, for my friend (who returned home from America by the last steamer) to stop his talk on automobiles and sky-scrapers. It was only a little while since the new moon, looking so attractive after a shower-bath of rain, had left the pine branches of my garden. I begged my friend to change his Western sack-coat for one of my *yukatas*, the cotton summer dress with somewhat demonstrative design (thank heaven, it is in the summer time all free, when we are allowed to act even fantastically), as it was, I told him informally, out of place in my Japanese house; I confess that the poetical balance of my mind has grown to be easily ruined by a single harsh note of the too real West. When I, with my friend new-made in Japanese robe, most comfortably stretched my body upon the mats, I felt the night lovely, the dusk so blessed; my friend said he wished, if possible, to cry heartily while listening to some

old Japanese songs of tragedy whose pain he had almost forgotten. The words reminded me at once that Madam Kosei, the well-known singer of *gidayu* or lyrical drama, was appearing in some entertainment-house close by; with much glee he received my suggestion to take him there. When we left the house the moon was seen nowhere.

"Dzden, den, den"—the sound of the three-stringed *samisen* trying for the right note was already heard when we sat ourselves down in the hall, where my artistic mind began soon to revolt against the electric-light, which only serves to diffuse the music deep or low, the song tragic or simple; I thought if we only could hear them in a small room, perhaps of eight mats, with candles lighted, where the voice reaches the ecstasy when it suffocates! The husky cough, quite natural for the professional singer who has forced her voice too severely, made us understand that we were going to hear Kosei in the tragic death of O Ryu, that poor willow-tree woman who grew under the blessing of dews and suns.

The audience hushed like water when the

singer's voice rose: "The leaves fall, the tree cracks, the axe flashes. . . ." O Ryu, the willow-tree woman, shivers, trembles in pain as her last days are reached; she cries over her sleeping child, Midori, whom she got by Heitaro, her husband, and she says: "The child will grow even without the mother's milk. If he should become great and wise and live up to his father's reputation with arrow and bow! Oh, must his poor mother go away? The voice, sad voice, calls me back to the tree. Oh, voice calling me back. . . ."

Once she had no human form, but was only the willow-tree on whose high branch Suyetaka's hawk alighted when he was hunting, which was almost doomed, then, to be cut down, as he saw no other way to get the hawk; it was Heitaro, the clever archer, who shot the branches to pieces and rescued the bird, of course, and also saved the tree from its ruin. The inhuman tree grew human at once in feeling the sense of gratitude towards Heitaro, whom she decided to serve in the role of woman: the days, the years that passed made her forget that she was tree; her love

for her temporary husband was sealed in Midori.

The scene changes from night to day. The fallen willow-tree never moves when people try to pull it to its destination. Who in the world could know its secret heart? Who could hear its inner voice, except Heitaro and Midori? When they hasten to the place, the tree, not wholly dead, seems to stir as if in joy; why should it not, as its husband and child have come to bid farewell at the moment it is taken over the dark and death? The tree moves when Midori and Heitaro lead the people in singing, because they pull with the strength of humanity and love.

We, I and my friend, were silent when we returned home from the entertainment-hall; I fancied that he was impressed as much as I was. We all take the same step in the matter of humanity without any discussion. I left my friend in his room, I myself retiring into the mosquito-net of my compartment, whence I could see the paper lantern still burning in the darkness, swinging as if a lost spirit of the willow-tree, perhaps, of my garden; what

would it speak to me? I could not sleep for some long while, being absorbed in my own reflection.

It was Buddhism which encouraged and endorsed the superstition, even with added reasonings; it would only need a little light of circumstances to make it shine like a pearl which quickens itself, to speak figuratively, with the golden faith within. The humanising of a tree, whether it be a willow or a pine, has its origin in the general Nature-worship which is as old as the sun and the moon; I think it is one of the prides we can fairly well claim that we never laugh, jeer at, or wound Nature, and never invade her domain with cold hearts; it is, in truth, the Western intellect that has taught us of the scheme and secret how to force the battle against Nature. Must we thank the West for our disillusionment? It was the romance of trees—like that of the willow, for instance—that saved at least old Japan from natural ruin; how such an allegorical story impressed our Japanese mind!

I used to hear, when I was young, of the lovely maiden ever so young and sad, who

disappeared, like a star into the morning mist, into the cherry-tree, when the evening bell sent the sun down across the West, and the flower-petals fell fast to the ground ; I began to dream of the luminous moment of meeting with that lady of apparition, when my boyhood grew to ripen into youth, and of the ecstasy of shock and deathless joy in her single touch. I confess I was ever so haunted by the woman of the cherry-tree. The pain I earned from realising the fact that I should never get her, although she was within my hand's graps, became healed only lately.

Where I lost my idealism I got humanity ; to-day, when my days of youth have begun to fade into the colour of grey, I am married, and have chileren crawling by my side. The story of the willow-tree appeals to my mind more intensely than the lady of the cherry-blossom. I think that the worship of the tree belongs to an age ten years later than the flower adoration.

THE EAST : THE WEST

I LOOKED aside through the window where the young-green willow branches, to use a Japanese phrase, almost smoked in uneasiness like the love-touched heart of a girl, when our talk (nothing better than an informal talk on art and poetry to fill an hour of an April afternoon already grown gold and slow) flagged; we three found a haven from the city's noise by a little table at the restaurant off Ginza, the Boulevard of Tokyo. My friend-composer finished his cup of tea, and took up again his talk where he had left off.

"Once I made the late Mr. K., the well-recognised Japanese musician connected with the Kabukiza Theatre, listen to the tune of Payne's 'Home, Sweet Home.' What did he say, do you suppose, when it was over? You are mistaken to think his musical mind rightly responded when he appeared fallen in meditation; he said to my amazement: 'That was very grand.' And he said further that he would like to play it, for instance, at the scene first or last, where many *samurais* in formal

dress, sitting in perfect order, were ready to speak their greeting of New Year's Day to their lord just stepped out from within; indeed, that was what I never expected to hear. However, I was amused to think it was another instance to prove how differently in music the Japanese mind, at least, the old Japanese mind, is pleased to work from the West; you can imagine how mystified he looked when I told him about the nature of tune I had played him."

This delightful talker looked upon me as if he wanted my word to endorsement; my mind grew at once alive, being given an interesting subject even for serious consideration; and I said:

"I had my own experiences not only once when I found myself in exactly the same situation as that Mr. K.; it was in the earlier days of my American life, when my exotic Japanese mind was still far from being acclimatised in the West. Once in New York, my American friend took me one evening to a certain Webber and Field to see the so-called artists in the 'cake-walk'—whether they were

negroes or whites I hardly remember now—that fantastic way of step on the stage most popular in those days. I knew that I could not help laughing when I saw the players with stove-pipe hat red or blue, with ribboned huge cane in hand, leaping across the stage like vagarious spirits who had dethroned themselves of their own free will; but once when I closed my eyes to give my sense of hearing full play, what do you suppose? I confess that my tears strangely fell without being called. My friend said sarcastically: 'Is it a Japanese way to cry when you are jolly?' When he meant that we Japanese often act in the reverse, and generally speaking, that we are paradoxical people by nature, I think that somehow he hit the right mark; but I dismissed the whole thing without answering him, because it was a question too complicated to explain in one breath. And I am sure that he would have asked me why, even if I had told him simple that the music merry to him sounded to me sadly."

"Dr. C., you know, the German professor at the Musical College," my friend-composer interrupted me, as, doubtless, he wished to say

something before he forgot it, "most savagely denies even to-day after twenty years' residence here, our having any harmony in music; but the fact is that our Japanese mind is most deliciously, tenderly, sadly moved where the Western mind finds it most unsatisfactory. Listen to a *samisen* music (which is said in the West to be nothing more than a noise wild or primitive at the best) in a little lyrical tune, for instance, with the song which you (Yone Noguchi) translated:

His *haori*
She hid,
His sleeves
She held.
'Must you go, my lord,'
Says she.
From the lattice window
She slid
The *shoji* slight,
And she cries:
'Don't you see the snow?'

"Our Japanese mind, I believe, through the hereditary sense of hearing which is suddenly awakened by the shrill of a ghost in tune of

this *samisen,* the three-stringed instrument, not wild to us, but suggestive, not primitive but quite complex, will soon become impassioned into imagination; I dare say that we shall feel even a physical pain from love that the tune inspires, the love intensified into a feeling of sensuality. It is at such a moment when we forget the world and life, and pray to enshrine ourselves in love; why is it the *samisen,* does make us feel so, while having no power at all to command the foreign mind?"

"Not only in our sense of hearing"—I again resumed the chance to speak—"the other senses, whether they be five or ten, also work quite differently from those of the Westerners; and I cannot forget one instance to make me think that the American sense of seeing is a thing of a different order; that was the case of Sada Yacco and her company when they presented to the San Francisco audience, well, long ago, the sad secne of the farewell of Kusuoki and his little son. We thought it most strange when the saddest part to us Japanese made almost no impression on the American mind; of course, their ignorance of

the Japanese language counted a great deal; but when the sad facial expression of the Japanese players was taken as that of violence or anger, we thought that the matter was altogether hopeless."

"Does not such misunderstanding of the East with the West or the West with the East," ventured my other friend at the table, "exist also in literature and poetry?"

"I myself experienced as a writer in English that my own meaning or imagination was often wrongly taken; I can say at least that I found frequently that they were not fully understood; although it might be true, as a certain English critic commented on me the other day with his learned authority that I relied too much upon the words, that is to say, that I attempted to make them express too many colours and meanings. I dare say (is it my Oriental pride?) that the Western minds are not yet wide open to accept our Japanese imagination and thoughts as they are. It is a short cut, I have often thought, to look in a book of English translations from the Japanese, when we want to know the exact weakness of the English

language and literary mind. Last night, before I went to bed, I opened the pages of English translation of our *hokkus*, wherein the following piece was declared to be the most delicate :—

> Thought I, the fallen flowers
> Are returning to their branch;
> But lo! they are butterflies.

While I do not say that that is particularly poor, I never thought before, like many another Japanese I am sure, it was so good as a Japanese poem; if it means anything, it is the writer's ingenuity perhaps in finding a simile; but I wonder where is its poetical charm when it is expressed thus definitely. Definiteness is one of the English traits, I believe; and again, it is the strength of the English language and letters, but it is strange enough that it turns at once to weakness when applied to our Japanese thoughts and fancies of indefiniteness. To call the Japanese language ungrammatical, the Japanese mind vague, does no justice to them; their beauty is in their soaring out of the state of definiteness. Sadness in English is quite another word from joy or beauty; it is very

seldom that it expresses the other; but more often in our Japanese poetry they are the same thing; but with a different shade. 'Sadness in beauty or joy' is a phrase created comparatively recently in the West; even when sadness is used with the other in one breath, it is not from our Japanese understanding; for us Japanese, the words never exist apart from our colour and meaning. Not only in langauge but also in real life's action, is it so; it was the art of poetry of Monzaemon Chikamatsu, the great Japanese dramatist, that he made the cases of double tragedy of two unfortunate lovers (this most favourite subject) most beautiful and joyous; for them it was a joy and beauty to go to death through love. We have a phrase: 'We cry with our eyes, and smile in heart.' As we have no right expresion, let us admit for a little while the phrase 'the paradoxical Japanese'; such a main trait of the Japanese makes it difficult for the Western mind to understand us; and again it is why our poetry is a sealed book in the West."

HIBACHI

My antipathy to the Western stove, even to the old-fashioned English fireplace, may arise from its looking too clearly conscious of its own worth, ever so proudly assuming the first place in a room (what an egoist, indeed, looking as if it felt all the responsibility of the universe). Then I reflect on a hibachi or Japanese wooden fire-box, whose single-minded humbleness is the creation of no other country but Japan. It makes its own lifework to follow gracefully wherever you go in the house as a heaven-born servant, serving most beautifully in its small capacity; its loyalty is almost a slavery when it creeps even into a quilt to warm your feet at night. What a dear little thing of the world it is! I have some reasons to hug it sentimentally, because it sweetly makes me dream on this and that, with many precious things which I must have lost long before if it had not kept them in a drawer for me. Isn't the Japanese fire-box foxy to have a secret side-pocket? Why, you must not take that out; that's merely a girl's

hair. I would not tell you its history for the world. (I often smile to myself, thinking a little secret is rather cosy.) It is a charm which my old mother sent me quite long ago, when I was washing breakfast dishes from which drivers or milkmen had eaten, in the cellar of a country hotel in California, and I carried it even to London afterwards, as I was afraid to call at Carlyle's House alone. His hard face always terrified me. This is my clumsy copying of a page from dear Blake's fat book kept at the British Museum; you shouldn't mistake it for a sample of child's art. I always think it is only Blake among the other thousand English poets and writers whom I can associate with our hibachi, whose fairy-like flame would be his poetical aspiration. Certainly he would have been pleased with it. Isn't the intensiveness of burning charcoal the intensiveness of his work? There should be a close relation between the modern writers in the West and the stove or fireplace, without whose help their sustaining work would not be half well done. How could Ibsen and Shaw become so thoroughly egoistic if they had not

been comfortable by the side of a glorious fire? And is not individualism a product of Western wealth, spiritual and unspiritual? It seems to me that the egoism of Ibsen, Shaw and many others is accidental, being a freak of a situation in which they found themselves; they might be a different sort of writers if they had only a little fire-box to make them look happy in winter, as in Japan. While wealth is a Western weakness, poverty or want of comfort is the keynote of our Japanese civilisation, if we have any. It is our strength to let artistic appreciation make a balance in all the phases of Japanese life; art is the necessity with us, though it may be a luxury in the West.

Japan, at least old Japan, succeeded in teaching to everything, human or unhuman, a proper amount of etiquette, the first principle of which is to understand your own place; the manner which the little Japanese fire-box is pleased to express is most admirable, It would not dare to step up on to a *tokonoma* or raised place of art in the drawing-room, or even attempt to approach it too closely; I can imagine a gentle talk of Japanese women in

the circumspect burning of its charcoals under the ashes silken-soft and grey. This is the Imperial Kingdom, where the spirit of class distinction reigns over even the hibachis; there are several kinds of them, aristocratic or plebeian. I always feel a pity for the fire-box called Nagahibachi, or long fire-box, which is ruled out from the drawing-room only from the fault of being too large. Bigness here is often regarded as inartistic. We are pleased to admire a dwarfed tree on the holy place of the *tokonoma*.

However, this Nagahibachi, exiled to the sitting-room, where the lady of the house takes her queen's seat, would be one's sweetest memory; my reminiscence of my childhood days, perhaps like any other man's, always begins with it. I cannot forget the patient look of dear mother, who customarily sat by it; I often thought there was no greater confidante for her than that fire-box, one foot by two feet, who laughed and again cried with her in each change of her moods. Although every hibachi is feminine, that Nagahibachi is particularly so, with its own special tact of

making one feel at home at once, comfortable and reflective like a wise woman. It was there that my mother often told me a story of Taro Urashima, who happened to marry the most beautiful lady under the depth of the seas, and set me on a sweet dreaming; again, it was there that she cried in denying my great desire to buy a Webster's dictionary, saying that poverty was inconvenient when I told her it was necessary for my learning the English language. My family, though it was not particularly poor, could not afford to spend much money for a little boy, as I was then; and what did I wish to make out from Webster when I had hardly finished my first Reader yet? I was quite an ambitious boy already, I think. How I wish to return again to my youngest days, and crawl into her sitting-room, a four mat and a half affair, and feel her tender breath as a real child in that safest citadel of her own creation, which would rise or fall with the long fire-box. Her own kingdom was small indeed. But is there any sweeter kingdom than that?

THE DECLINE OF THE JAPANESE TASTE OF TONGUE

My mind which, as she felt more natural, even sublime in the greyness of silence and general passivity of Winter, experienced a sudden disturbance in the tempest-like falling of the cherry-blossoms of April, and wondered like Ki no Tomonori in his famous *uta* poem :

"'Tis the Spring day
With lovely far-away light!—
Why must the flowers fall
With heart unquiet?"

now seems to be returning most gladly to her original state of serenity, to resume the world-old dream at the place she left off some little while ago, now in this month of May, my best-beloved season as some old *hokku* poet well-said :

"What to see? Why, green leaves,
There's mountain cuckoos,—
And then—new bonitos."

I thank God (whoever he be), as thanked I him in many previous Mays, for the fact that,

without being troubled with any restlessness of mind, but with all Browning's content in his little song, I can face, as a man should, Nature who has changed her red dress of Spring for this greenness of early Summer, and do thrice exclaim, "Oh, green life," as Fiona McLeod exclaimed, although I may mean that quite differently; if I thank God for the trees as I do, it is not for their flowers or fruits but for their green leaves under whose magical spell I revive my own youthfulness and am glad again to start life anew making, so to say, an eighth rise after seven falls. I confess I had not heard before our mountain cuckoos; my imagination would be glad to think of them, like Wordsworth, as an invisible thing, a voice, a mystery, never seen but eternally longed for; are they not like the English cuckoos, a winged ghost of the hope or love of the golden time we wish to command? Although the bonitos have lost their dignity lately, I dare say, among modern Japanese, the above 'seventeen syllables,' a voice of not only the poet but the populace, must have been written at the time of the height of the old Japanese civilization that is

during the Tokugawa feudalism, when the people's taste of tongue grew most delicate and specialized, and their heart at once responded to the call of the first bonitos which, as Basho wrote, would have been left living at Kamakura; I am told a story perhaps true that the Yedo people (present Tokyoans) were pleased to buy them even when they had to raise the price by pawning. Oh, dear, rotten, foolish, romantic old Tokugawa civilization! It may not have been their taste itself; what they craved was, doubtless, just the feeling that they had eaten the first bonitos of the year; indeed, for that feeling, not only in food but in any other thing, they lived and died. Oh, most unpractical old Tokyoans, what slavishness to the senses!

The other day I opened the books written by Shamba, and came across a little thing called "The Face and the Back of a Man Proud in Cooking," somewhere, with the following lines:

"I presume that your cook has been changed. No, he has not been changed? Oh, yes, he must have been changed. This honourable

tongue of mine is a cloudless looking-glass you cannot deceive."

Although such words as the above were written, of course, by the author to laugh over a *hankatsu* or a fellow half-learned, they cast a light on the time when cooking was studied, like flower-arrangement or tea-drinking, even by the populace; it was the civilization of the Tokugawa feudalism that found first the development of house-building as it was natural for the *samurais*, those uncultured builders of the city, to think of the house to satisfy their wild vanity; and when the time was on the speedy way to advancement, we saw, as a natural development, the sudden demonstration of dresses with new designs and colour schemes. It was at the Bunkwa and Bunsei (1804—1830) that the art or, let me say, poetry of cooking had been creating its own cult, and as a matter natural, the establishment of the famous restaurants or so-called tea-houses, for instance, Hirasei, Kasai Taro, Momokawa, the most famous of all, Yaozen under the patronage of Hoitsu and other known artists and poets, originated in those days; it is not too much to

say that those periods, I mean the time of Bunkwa and Bunsei, are the zenith of our feudal civilization in which we heard already the voice of the approaching fall.

I have been interested lately in the life of Hoitsu Sakai, one of the most distinguished decadents of the early nineteenth century, who, being born the second son of the fifteenth Lord Sakai, escaped from the formality or pretence attached to his birth into art and poetry by whose kind restraint his soul freedom-loving and even dissipated (it was the good old time when dissipation was thought quite natural) was distilled and ennobled; we always attribute it to the times that the high-minded exultation and decorative composure of Korin of the former age became a delicacy and refinement in Hoitsu's art, and the care-unknown masculinity of Kikaku's poetry turned to more frivolity and witticism at the best in his *hokkus;* but there is no denying the fact that his senses poetical or otherwise had become most sensitive. And it was indeed wonderful to know what delicacy (that artistic delicacy might be compared with that of Utamaro's women who would appear

disturbed even by one touch of your fingertip) not only Hoitsu but nearly all the artists and poets of that age had in all life's questions, from the dress to the food. Now to return to their delicate taste of tongue. It was those people who could distinguish the place of origin of water from its taste, could tell where the tea was produced, by what sunlight it was fed, from the drinking of it; I was told that once Hoitsu ate a *sashimi* (slices of raw fish) of bonito at Yaozen and called the cook and asked him if he had not used a knife freshly whetted. The cook surprised by his words begged him to tell him how he knew it. Hoitsu said that he smelled a faint odour of whetstone on the fish, and then told him that he should dip the knife, when newly whetted, into a well for several hours before using.

The Tokugawa feudalism fell after long three hundred years of power, and the new regime has not arisen yet; the people were suddenly thrown into tumult and suspicion fifty or sixty years ago; how could they admire the green leaves of early summer, as I do to-day, in peace and content, and wish to hear mountain cuckoos

and taste the first bonitos? It was a pity that their taste of tongue which, as the last development of civilization, had highly advanced, now lost its own place; and when the time began to return to prosperity quite altered from the former age, after finishing the so-called civil war of the tenth year, the cult or art of old Japanese cooking found the situation unfavourable under the invasion of Western food; it was since 1880 that the restaurants of Western way of cooking, here with the name of Western Sea house, like the American Hall or London Restaurant, began to flock into the city. Here they met an immediate reception, because the food was served quickly, unlike the regular old Japanese tea-house, and above all the charge was small. There is no better supporter for a restaurant than economy; with that backing the foreign restaurants became successful. I myself always drop in one of those, whether it be London Restaurant (Oh, what does that mean anyhow?) or American Hall (again what does that mean?) to take a little lunch when I am in town, because, as I said before, the charge is small (in fact it is extraordinarily high for what

I shall get) and the service quick. Pray, gentleman at the other side of the table, eat your soup without making such a noise. Oh, again, do not use toothpicks so often while eating; pray, do not open your mouth so wide, at least to yawn. Who dropped a knife? Whose napkin is that I see here? Oh, what mannerlessness! Is that all the table manners for a people who claim to have learned etiquette and rites in the olden days? And on the other hand, what cooking! How tasteless, how watery! It always sets my mind to thinking what use to introduce the superficial Western civilization here; what do you say, one hundred years we must have before we can digest it completely. What concerns me here chiefly is how the people's taste in cooking has declined; is it unrecoverable? Yes, it is unrecoverable indeed. "We are returning to the barbarous states of the Middle Age; oh, how meaningless, when facing the Western dishes; and the cook is no better than the eater himself," I exclaimed.

The Decline of the Japanese Taste of Tongue

THE FOURTEENTH OF DECEMBER

WITHOUT, the wind blows, the same old Japanese wind as ages ago; within, a porcelain gas grate, imported from London or New York, hissed unceremoniously in its foreign, as we say, throaty voice. A while ago I begged the manager of this restaurant to stop the barbarity of a graphophone, with all due acknowledgement of its innocence in rendering Robert Ingersoll's speech or a anatch of coon song or what not. Here is a dining room à la Francaise, with walls painted in red and looking-glasses on every side; we, all fellow-workers at Keio College, Tokyo, fifty or sixty in all, gathered around the table, quite a family affair, for the customary banquet at the end of the year before we hasten to slip into our little nest for four weeks' rest. Prof. B., who has returned recently from Berlin, talked on the European revolution in the theatrical art and the work of Max Reinhardt, only to irritate the old mind of Mr. H. who did not know this brilliant German was too, after all, a romanticist, but with a different mien; Prof. A.

who sat on my left, evidently with H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw in his mind, was going to expand his opinion on the English departure from stereotyped solidarity, at least in literature. Did I listen to him? Not I. As my mind lately has grown to be delighted in simplicity, my eyes most ardently fell on the menu; I confess that such an innocent word written on it gave me a far better impression than words spoken by poets from the golden clime. I read the menu from top to bottom, and again from bottom to top; when I could not find anything special, I set my eyes on the date printed at the top, "December 14th, 1911," as if on the name of some strange new dish.

"Oh, this is the fourteenth of December," I exclaimed in my dreamy mind.

I raised my face to the looking-glass on the opposite side, where a large part of the scene of the banquet (what a monkey show, indeed!) was reflected, all the guests in Western dress, quite skilful in handling knives and forks, looking even natural as if they were born with butter and bread; I presently asked myself as in a dream if this was real Japan where our

fathers, only fifty years ago, wore two swords in place of the gold watch of to-day, and ate rice gruel in place of beef and lobster. Oh, what a change! And then I questioned again how true Japan could be related with the Western luxuries; I am sure that real Japan would do very well without Chamberlain's single eyeglass and Turkish cigarette. My mind, which suddenly hated and loathed our modern life, tacitly declined to take the asparagus when they were passed round, simply from the reason of their being of foreign origin, and tried to live (bless my soul) on the very thought of the fourteenth of December. What about that fourteenth of December? Why, it was on that night, that is to say, this very night some two hundred fifty years ago, that the now world-famous forty-seven *ronins* headed by Kuranosuke Oishi, kicked the silence and snow with their determined feet of loyalty, and rushed into their enemy's house. Yes, it is said that it snowed terribly that night, although to-night only the wind blows without.

My mind took me back straight to my

boyhood days, particularly the fourteenth of December of more than twenty years ago, when we little boys used to gather in the prayer-room of Kojoji Temple, and read, all through the night, the whole history of the loyal spirits of those forty-seven *ronins* under the candle lights which burned well to encourage us. How we cried in reading the part of Chikara Oishi, a slip of a boy of sixteen, who, with his father Kuranosuke, most composedly accomplished *harakiri* after the revenge was realised; we could not help feeling ashamed before him. When the night and also the reading had advanced, the Father of the temple used to offer us rice gruel, as the custom, to warm us up; what a difference between that rice gruel and the roast-beef of the present day! The rice gruel became, it is said, a customary treat (oh, this fourteenth night of December!) for the boys' party gathered to read about the forty-seven *ronins* ever since, as history or story tells us, Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami, the Prince of Sendai, first treated the *ronins* to rice gruel at dawn, that is on the fifteenth, when they passed before his palace

gate towards Sengakuji Temple, where their lord was buried. By the way, Sengakuji Temple is only a quarter of a mile from here where we are dining in Western fashion. The rice gruel and the *ronins* with the hearts of Bushido and simplicity. Oh, how they fit one another! Nobody, I am sure, would believe if he were told that the *ronins* accepted with many thanks Prince Sendai's treat, suppose, of oyster patties or soft-shell crabs. What an effeminacy in the Western dish!

Now, struggling with a rather tough roast beef (look at the Yorkshire pudding, a side dish offered at our President's suggestion, to please or amuse some of us who had sad experience at cheap English boarding houses) my mind did not hover round the table, but was outside in the street hastening, perhaps, towards Ryogoku Bridge upon the heap of snow now ceased to fall. Thanks for the magic of my imagination! My mind's eyes saw, with such a crowd here, the forty-seven loyalists, after the heroism of the night, marching by in ranks under the bright morning sun-

light which made us read the names in black characters embroidered on the broad white ground of their coats. So there is Yasubei Horibe. Is he Yagoro Senzaki? Our beloved Genzo Akagaki, the two-sword bacchus, looks so handsome, and sober too. Oh, where is the poet Gengo Otaka?

The immortality of Otaka is doubtly sealed by the now-famous letter by the eminent poet Kikaku written to his friend at Akita, who by accident or fortune, was at the house of a neighbour of Kozuke no Kami, the *ronins*' enemy, for a poetly party on that very night; Otaka, the *hokku* poet, was despatched by his chief to go round and deliver the message that no hurt should be done to any neighbouring house, as the *ronins* were neither night robbers nor ruffians, but begging the people to keep a close watch against the possible outbreak of fires. And this Gengo Otaka was Kikaku's poetical friend. The latter's letter says:

"He left here as soon as his message was told. It goes without saying that his voice was most composed. I saw at once that his last moment was near. I rushed out of the

gate, exclaiming: 'Thy friend, Kikaku, is right here. Let him see thy heroism.' All the *ronins* must have already entered Kira's house at that moment. I sang aloud:

'It's light—
The snow upon my hat,
When it's mine.'

We shut the gate, raised the lighted lanterns by the outside fence, and secretly watched the progress of this extraordinary affair. The women called the men; the crying voice of boys and girls was carried by the sad wind. It seemed that the final object had been attained when the dawn approached. Gengo Otaka called on us with Chikara Oishi to thank us; Oh, it would be called, indeed, the honour of *samurais*. Otaka wrote the following poem:

'Oh, blessing of sunlight!
They will soon be crushed—
Those thick ices.'

(This *hokku* poem suggests that his aim in completing the final revenge has been accomplished under heaven's mercy.)

What a noble soul of Otaka! His image is unforgettable and ever looms before my eyes."

I was awakened from my dream by my friend at my right when he suddenly asked me why I kept such a silence to-night. I thanked the President and fellow-workers for the pleasure of the banquet; but what I really meant was that I was glad to be undisturbed even for awhile, in following my sweet dream.

The party soon broke up. I bade good-night to my friend, who vanished into the cold wind and darkness in the street.

"This is certainly a prosaic life we are leading," I exclaimed.

A HANDKERCHIEF

THE clouds, impossible, sad, had at last broken last night; thank God, the rainy season is over. I agree with one who says that the true Japanese atmosphere, intensely grey, soft like a tired breath of ageless incense, is to be found in the rainy season; but like anyone who is rebellious (to be rebellious is quite Japanese-like), I always objected to seeing its beauty. This morning the sunlight is so golden, but, I say, not too harsh; I doubted my own eye and even thought if this were not somewhere in Hawaii or the Philippines. It is the fact that I was in Tokyo, taking a street car towards my college at Mita. The car was crowded with people who, as it was already in the hot summer, had decided—all of them —without any discussion, to act barbarously and wear the thinnest *kimono* just for an excuse; many of them even exposed their naked legs. But their barbarism did not wound my mind, which had seen enough of Western customs; and it appeared quite striking and romantic, like Hokusai's pictures. I

might be myself a bit of a savage in my heart, the lover of tropical unmorality; to be unmoral is at least comfortable. I found many women in the car, who strangely enough, looked equally young, wild and curious like a pussy; I suddenly thought myself to be a foreigner, to whom the Japanese women ever appear as girls. It may be true that they never grow old and ugly. There sat right before me a really pretty girl, who might not be over seventeen; her ivory-skinned cheeks glowed within like a pearl under the already hot sunlight. She wore a cotton cloth, of course, of one thickness, with a large design which was a creation of old Japan, when people were gay and free; she looked like one who has just stepped out of an old colour-print, massive in colour, weary in tone. She had such a beautiful eye, clear like a sea, determined, not a bit afraid; on the contrary, even wishing to be loved by a Western-sea man. She might be a Madam Chrysanthemum in Loti's story; like her she was, I fancied, charmingly barbarous. This Madam Chrysanthemum had a little cotton handkerchief under her bosom, which she took

out, fondly looked on, and hid again. It was no other kind than a common handkerchief with which foreigners blow their noses. Why does she take a particular care of it, I wondered. Not only this girl, nearly all the Japanese women, carry a cotton handkerchief, not for blowing their noses, but for many other decent purposes; I thought it was most absurd, even shabby, as I learned in the West it was merely to blow the nose. But this Madam Chrysanthemum did not strike me as laughable at all, even with her cotton handkerchief, which she took out, fondly looked on, and hid again. I thought it was most important to solve why she took such a particular care with it.

It might be, I fancied, from the hereditary reverence towards cotton; we have a romantic legend of a certain weaving maiden in the sky in connexion with the Milky Way, and we regard her even as a goddess. It may not be possibly that. Then what? I kept up my reverie while the car rolled on unceasingly. I suddenly thought it might be the handkerchief which had been given her (this inexperienced

Madam Chrysanthemum) by her Western lover, who, good God! bought her whole soul and heart with such a trifling gift as that. "Yes, it is that. Poor Madam Chrysanthemum," I exclaimed in a dream even to frighten one who sat by me.

A handkerchief

I got off the car at the proper place to hurry to my college; but my mind was still occupied with the handkerchief of the Madam Chrysanthemum whom I saw in the car. She is honest and true, I thought. I arrived at the college some time before my class hour; I sat on the chair in the professors' room; and I suddenly thought if I were not a Madam Chrysanthemum who had not a cotton handkerchief but a stray knowledge of English literature which I take out from my bosom and look upon in the class-room. It is, indeed, the little knowledge, almost valueless, like a handkerchief with which a foreigner, especially an English-speaking one, might blow his nose; but I got it by selling my whole soul and heart. I am honest and true, like that Madam Chrysanthemum in my dream; do you dare laugh at me?

MORNING-GLORY

CERTAINLY it was Korin's adventurous turn of artistic mind to strikingly introduce the morning-glory, the blushing flower lasses by the bamboo fences of the countryside almost too shy to call attention, into the six-folded screen of gold (what an aristocratic world) in pigments of red, white, purple and green; while, far from deeming Korin a true artist of flowers, I always agree with him in the point of his emphasising, let me say, the greatness of little things. Through the virtue of such an Oriental attitude of philosophy which serves as moral geometry, defining our sense of proportion to the universe, we have made the morning-glory gain its floral distinction of to-day from the state of nameless weed of long ages ago which a certain Obaku temple priest of Uji brought from China. What a change in the public estimate!

I love the months of summer, because I can commune more intimately then with the nature from whose heart of imagination and peace, unlike that of spring too fanciful and defiant, again unlike that of autumn too philosophical

and real, I will build a little dream and slowly wear away my soul as if a cicada tired after a heartful song; I love them as I find in them quite a celtic infinitude which is commingled twilight and weariness. Hear the nocturnal song of the summer nights in the flashes of fireflies and lanterns swinging as if the spirits from another world, which shall be, long before reaching the climax, interrupted by the early dawn (how short are the summer nights!), when my heart at once opens wide as the morning-glory; I am an early riser then, in spite of my being a late riser in other seasons, with that morning-glory whose floral beauty or flame is born out of dews and sunlight, the colour of transparency itself out of whose heart, as it seems to me, whether it be blue or purple, red or white, all the colour has been taken. How the flower stands in relation to the breath or odour of the summer dawn would be exactly the same problem as how I stand towards it; I am glad to read myself through their presence, my own strength of impulse towards nature and song. What a stretch of vines of the morning-glory, what force of theirs

hardly conceivable as belonging to the vegetable kind, what a sensitiveness more than human; there's no wonder when one can read every change of the hour and even minute of the day in their look and attitude. I often ask myself why they do not speak a word of grief or joy, when they fade away with their spirits of flight across the seas of the unknowable; perhaps they do speak it, although my ears seem not to hear it at all.

When Kaga no Chiyo, the lady *hokkushi* or seventeen-syllable poetess of some two hundred years ago, wrote—

"Asagawo ni
Tsurube torarete
Morai mizu."

I see at once, not the moral teaching, although the commentator wishes to bring it out first, but one beautiful emotion of accident realised by the morning-glory and her heart with the summer dawn as a background. But where Sir Edwin Arnold translated Chiyo's poem into the following English:

"The morning-glory
Her leaves and bells has bound

My bucket-handle round.
I could not break the bands
Of those soft hands.
The bucket and the well to her left,
'Let me some water, for I come bereft.'"

I see that the lyrical gleam of the original has turned, alas! to prosaic formality: I almost cry that it is hopeless if the poet has to put in two lines (the fourth and fifth) which the original has not (in fact, the translation has ten times more than the original, and spiritually ten times less), and wonder at the poetical possibility of the English mind. And how those rhymes bother my Japanese mind in love with irregularity!

It might be proper to thank, if thank one must, our Japanese moralists for their tireless propagation in popularising the morning-glory, as they find them to be the things fittest for encouraging the habit of early-rising; it seems they do not quite understand how the word simplicity sounds to our modern minds, whose passion, is more psychical, when those good old moralists wish to solve all the questions of the morning-glory with the power of that one

word. I agree with them in calling them plebeian or democratic on account of the little cost of raising them; I see frequently they are blooming as beautifully as in any millionaire's garden upon the dangerous roof of tile or badly kept bamboo porch for people who cannot well afford to have even a few yards of ground in crowded cities. It is surprising to find out that the flowers which were raised under such conditions of privation always get the distinguished medals at the general exhibition. I am told that the chrysanthemums are often the true cause of a man's poverty; but the morning-glories will never invite such a reproach when they only entreat you to rise early (but, remember, with plenty of love), and, when you have company, suggest you to offer a cup of tea.

Putting aside all sentimentality, the whole credit, I think, should go to our horticulturists, who, as with the chrysanthemum, have raised the morning-glory from a weed into a floral wonder as we see it to-day, of such a variety of shapes, from a dragon's moustache to the hanging bell; of such a variety of colour, from

the foam of the sea or frozen moonlight to the purple sky or striped shade of a cascade; of such a variety of size, from half a foot in diameter to starlike smallness. There is no other flower like the morning-glory, so sensitive to our human love, and, let me say, horticultural art. I have only to wonder whether the human beings and the morning-glory are not born from the same old heart of mystery in Japan.

THE JAPANESE PLUM-BLOSSOM

My friend looked aghast when I declared: "The beauty that we gladly attach to the Japanese plum-blossom (I say Japanese to distinguish it from the Western plum-blossom) may not exist; it is, I dare say, only the stories or poems of long-dead people which are associated with them that make them look beautiful." I do not mean to speak striking language merely to pose as a clever man; I always believed in what I said to my friend upon the plum-blossom. It would perhaps be better to begin with the definition of beauty; beauty is no beauty, I think, if it has no universal appeal. I almost thought it wrong to speak of the beauty of the plum-blossom, though beautiful it is in some meaning; I was often asked by a foreigner why we make so much of them. It is perfectly right of him not to see the beauty which we think we see well; because a Japanese story or poem in association with the plum-blossom makes no slightest impression on his mind. It is in that story or poem, as I said before, their beauty is, but not

in the flowers themselves. We at once see the tremor of the ghosts of old history or tradition, the ghosts of reminiscences, in the thrill of whiteness in their petals, we might say, like something of an angel's smile or like a rim of eternity; if there is an unmistakable beauty in the plum-blossom, it is in your own mind. Well, after all, where is beauty if not in your imagination?

However, there are some reasons why our ancestors loved the plum-blossom and we love them still. I do not know how we became the passionate lovers of flowers: it is the fact that we are; and during the months of winter we are deprived of joy with the flowers. And the plum-blossom happens to appear from under much snow and wind as a harbinger or prophet of spring. Some Japanese essayist says: "you are the prophet Jeremiah; you are John the Baptist. Standing before you I feel as though in the presence of some solemn master. Yet by your presence I know that winter has passed and that the delightful spring is at hand." The fact of their being a first-born among the flowers makes the Oriental mind, in

love of symbolism and allegory, associate it with courage and undaunted spirit; their simplicity in appearance, their utter lack of wealth in floral substance, has become profitably an object-lesson for the cherishing of pride even in poverty. A thought of plum-blossom reminds me of an age, perhaps the age under the Hojo feudalism, when life's simplicity was promulgated even as a theory; I think the love and admiration of the plum-blossom belong to a comparatively modern age in Japan, which is almost agelessly old. But I do not mean to say they had no admirer in ancient age: they had, for instance, Michizane of the nineth century.

There is, in fact, an almost endless list of people in Japanese tradition or story who have left a sign of close attachment for them; they are not the flowers for children and people uneducated, but for those of culture and imagination, who are in truth their creators and at the same time their admirers. The mere existence of them as flowers is slight; but it is our imagination that makes them great.

Now, speaking of the evolutionary side, it seems to me that they have almost reached the

highest possible when they turn to fragrance; the flowers gained it by sacrifice of the bodily beauty. Oh, what a fragrance! If there is any flower that shows the utmost economy of force, it is the plum-blossom. If they exist, they exist in suggestion; they are not the flowers of display like the cherry-blossom or camellia. They are suggestive: therefore they are strong. They are the Oriental flower through and through, and, above all, the gentleman of flowers of the East—simple, brave, economical, true and suggestive.

I always come to a plum orchard at the proper season, not only to admire them but to gain the spiritual lesson. Our forefathers used the flowers and trees to advantage as an object-lesson, as it is was not the day of text-books; and I hate to learn from the books, and come to the plum-blossom to improve my thoughts, and always feel happy that I have learned something of them.

CHRYSANTHEMUM

No doubt your heart of real flower-lover will be quick to denounce Dangozaka of Tokyo, where the annual chrysanthemum show, the most bewildering, fantastic thing of the world, in fact, is held. It is not only Hoichi, but everybody whose mind is in an old-fashioned quiet cast will call the waxwork chrysanthemum showman of Dangozaka an inferior heart of man. However, no one who never saw it can imagine the cleverness and some sort of wonderful art of Japan that are expressed in these show-pieces. Most of the scenes of the Dangozaka puppet show are from an old play, or a page of history, or most memorable of all, the newest occurrences of the day commemorated in chrysanthemums. The central idea is to build the flower monument of the years before we enter into sleep, silence, and oblivion, and the rather cruel act of separation from flower of December and January sets in with snow and storm. Indeed, autumn is the very season for our minds to think and reflect what we did in the last nine

months. The flowers which are used for the puppet show are the real potted ones, not cut flowers, the lovely plants in full bloom, the genuine plants, the roots of which are skilfully hidden or disguised. The colour of the flowers will be combined to represent the gowns; the harmony of colours and grace of lines are indeed striking. How docile they are! Their docility is like that of the most beautiful and sweet of women. If you hear a voice composed of sky and light, in silk, laces and jewels and curls, certainly you will see in the chrysanthemum gowns the true lyric and song of the sun, the earth, man and life, above all, of Autumn.

Besides the puppet show, this Dangozaka, like the gardens of Counts Okuma and Sakai, is famous, too, for the real chrysanthemums. Oh, what a wonder of the flower corridors! Here you see a kind which is to be compared only with fairies with magic on fingertips, the flower that stopped dancing by accident and gazes at you ready to commence again any moment. It is called the "Dethroned Angel;" but I should like to call it the "Angel Born on

the Earth." See this flower named "Amano-kawa"—Milky Way—really the name itself tells. It is coloured in light purple that is woven from the silver of the mist and gentle rain; if you see it from a proper distance, it is no other than a Milky Way almost ready to disappear and still quite distinct in its airiness. Here is a kind with the name of "Dew" or Tsuzu, whose colour is, of course, white, the creation or fashioning of frost and freeze; if you touch it, it were no wonder if it should vanish like a dream or poetry. "Haru Kasumi," or Spring Haze, reminds me of the day, or Spring with the air and wind and smoke-like amethysts, and our mind is nimble as that of a lark; the flower is grey-coloured, and its shape charmingly gay. You can see without seeing it what it might be when you are told it is "Natsu Gumo," or Summer Cloud; it is a fantasy of the cloud that left the mountain, the most strange wings or curls of the flower floating like bursts of light. Of course, it is "First of Japan," or Nippon Ichi, as it is the plant with more than one thousand blossoms red, white, purple and

yellow, a surprise of pell-mell in flower, the most wonderful of Japan.

For a thousand years the chrysanthemum was admired as a retired beauty by the garden fences, and under a simple methods of culture; but it became the flower of rich personages to a great measure under the Tokugawa feudal *regime*; and lately the culture of *kiku*, or chrysanthemum, is the greatest luxury. It would surprise you to know how much Counts Okuma and Sakai, these two best-known chrysanthemum raisers in Japan, have to spend yearly. It seems to me that such is a degeneration; still you cannot but appreciate and admire our advance in horticulture. When the chrysanthemum used to be called, that is of course, long ago, "Kukuri Bana," or Binding Flower, from the reason that the flowers tie or gather themselves at the top, and have the appearance of a bouquet, they were supposed to be even a sort of wild grass, perfectly unknown to a flower-lover. The honour of the creation of the modern wonder of chrysanthemum goes to a somewhat bigoted florist, to a somewhat frenzied horticulturist, to whom

we owe, not only a chrysanthemum bed, but nearly all exquisite flower-beds, our more varied, more delicious vegetables and fruits. What a surprising advance of the chrysanthemum from being a mere weed; and what a wonder of a evolution!

Maeterlinck says: "It is among familiar plants, the most submissive, the most docile, the most tractable and the most attentive plant of all that we meet on life's long way. It bears flowers impregnated through and through with the thoughts and will of man; flowers already human, so to speak, and, if the vegetable world is some day to reveal to us one of the worlds that we are awaiting, perhaps it will be through this flower that we shall learn the first secret of existence, even as, in another kingdom, it is probably through the dog, the almost thinking guardian of our homes, that we shall discover the mystery of animal life."

After all, it may not be altogether ridiculous to fancy the day will come when the chrysanthemums will speak to you and me of the secret and beauty of their flower kingdom. And this ghostly world and life are really mysterious.

CHERRY-BLOSSOM

THE cherry-blossom has its great popularity with us, unlike the plum-blossom, largely because we have no need to refert o any particular story or tradition (though stories and traditions of it abound); but only to itself for our appreciation. With us appreciation of it is most natural, while often forced art in another place. And you can make on the spot, if you wish, a story or tradition, of heavenly thing or human being, to suit the cherry-blossom and also your own whim, and even imagine it to be partly your own creation. It is remarkable that any story or tradition, provided it is beautiful, will be found fit for it. I know some flowers of whom I can fancy an ugly thing; but your imagination will soon be disarmed if you start with hostile intention towards the cherry-blossom. It seems to me that the biggest offence to the cherry-blossom is to write poetry on it. How many million poems have we written on it? It is really appalling to see what bad poems we could turn out; it is a fact that the poems on the cherry-blossom have

never even once been good. I do not like to believe it to be from the reason that it is a very difficult subject to write on. Indeed, I incline to think that the flower itself is ever so pleased even with a bad poem. There is a flower like the plum-blossom for instance, looking so critical and hard to please, whose severe appearance repels poor poetry; and we are almost afraid to write a line on the lotus, because it looks so holy. And the lone formal behaviour of the Iris makes our personal approach impossible. It is like the Japanese tea-master wrapped in cold silence. But the cherry-blossom is in temperament like love, generous enough like love to make a poet believe his work is good; but in truth he always fails, again as in love.

I often quarrel with my friend, who insists that the cherry-blossom is vain, like a pretentious woman; I always say to him that a proof that it is not will be seen in the fact that it never asks your imagination to value it for more than it is, as does the plum-blossom sometimes, and the morning-glory quite often. If you think it is pretentious, it is only the

flower's misfortune. Go into the street and ask any *jinrikisha* runner or even beggar whom you come across what he thinks about the cherry-blossom; you will be told by him exactly what you think about it, not less, not more. I am ready to say that there is only one occasion during a long run of three hundred and sixty-five days that we, low and high, poor and rich, perfectly agree with one another, in the moment when we are looking up to the cherry-blossom. Beneath the cherry-blossom we return at once to our first simplicity. Without that archaic strength we should never be able to hold up our lives and world.

I have heard many people could not understand why the plum-blossom must bloom at such an early season, when it even trembles on the naked branch, and why the maple leaves must turn red, like the showy *kimono* of a gay daughter in carnival, before they enter into wintry rest; but anybody's heart of hearts always awakens at once when he sees the cherry-blossom in bloom, indeed, the spring of his soul and the spring of the flower call to each other. We love it, too, because it is the Japanese

way to agree in love. We agree often foolishly but innocently, before we ask why, when we hear a voice of a leader. Who was the leader of the movement for the general admiration of the cherry-blossom? It was the children, I believe, who brought it home from the countryside a thousand years ago when it was a nameless flower; and it was the poets of the Heian age who properly introduced it into our Japanese life. The poets were the leaders; and our spirit, which is of the crowd, made us follow after them. Is there any greater work for the poets than the bringing of a flower into our lives? It is natural with us that the cherry-blossom should spiritually evolve and gain an influence even to change the physical side of our life, particularly two hundred years ago, when we had a popular saying that the *Bushi* or fighter was the man of men, and the cherry-blossom the flower of flowers. It is, indeed, an interesting psychological study to examine the real relation between the cherry-blossom and the Japanese. We danced, ate, and more freely drank the *sake* wine all gold, under its falling petals.

As we did last spring, so we will do again.

I do not care what history the cherry-blossom may have; what concerns me most here is its real beauty which is the more enhanced by a touch of sadness under the grey bosom of the sky with mists. What a lamentation of the flower when it is suddenly called to the ground by the evening temple bell or sudden rain! Why has she to haste when we all wish her to stay longer? I would like to think that we who come like the cherry-blossom shall go again like it. Our human lives are, indeed, beautiful like that flower, and its sigh under the nights wind is ours. It is quite commonplace to say that the life of a flower is short. But it is most wonderful to observe what a gusty energy is put into that short life of the cherry-blossom; it blooms, true to say, without any care, straight from the right heart of the earth.

A JAPANESE ON THE POET ROSSETTI

ROSSETTI had enough philosophy and theory, but what is most interesting in him as a poet, I believe, is not in them but in the very place where they were powerless—I mean the place where, like a light which brings out the shadow, they only appeared to present the other indefinable quality. I am glad his forethought and afterthought did not kill his inspiration. His art tried its utmost to give it the best possible light; and he could not be satisfied, as it seems to me, till he had taken its earthly life and flame out, and made it to be an art perfect after all desires. What we have in him, therefore, is the intensity that has subsided, the ecstasy that has become silent, the hope that has come to its rest. I admire the proud manner with which he soared above the journalism of his own day, which exists, not only to-day but any day, only to trouble the heart of art; however, he made his art, on the other hand, often too uncomfortable to look at simply through over-studied carefulness, and even the

saddest sort of zeal, and made us think that the beauty of his song was a confession, not a revelation such as I wish all poetry to be. It was beautiful, of course, when he was right, but in the reverse case he was a lost one, and perfectly unbearable. It is sad his excessive consciousness turned often to be mere artificiality. I always ask myself, when I read his poems, how long he spent for the distillation of his thought before he finally wrote it; even a poem he wrote on the spot, which was very rare, however, in his case, gives us an impression of great deliberation; this has, doubtless, some advantage, but often results in weakness. He was one of the most fastidious workers in poetry as he was in painting; it seems to me that he hated nothing more than profusion, and from that great hatred of profusion, made his loam of life asunder to create a simple thing. His simplicity was most beautiful as it had clarified from profusion. However, the life he imagined was not a happy one. He was too absolute in aim; his finding it very hard to satisfy himself is rooted in solitariness. The first thing we feel from reading his work is an uncompromising pride in

his art, and the mysterious dash into a world where only a strange intellect knows how to enjoy the material warmth and human softness. It is perfectly outrageous to call him a materialist; he made himself able, through the very virtue of material, to enter straightway into the heart of spirituality; it is more proper to say that he alone found the right meeting ground of spirit and material. He never could think anything spiritual apart from form and colour; the form and colour were divine themselves in his thought. They were at once the symbol of what they represented in spirit; he could not think of them merely as form and colour. He was, in that respect, quite Oriental.

If he had one great fault as a poet, it was that he always knew, too well indeed, what he was going to write; he could never forget himself. I do not think it was from his overconsciousness of his critical power; it may be that he could not become so bold to trust only in his impulse, or that his own art, he thought, was not a thing to play with, but to respect with all his heart. His intellect was too noble to forget the imagination; what appeared quite

logical and critical in his emotion is not the real part at all.

I have been for many months now studying with my students in college on Rossetti, starting with his lyrics and almost finishing his sonnets. I found that it was more easy in truth for them to understand him (appreciate too), striking enough to say perhaps, than even Longfellow of homespun simplicity. It may be from the reason that they are too old to be content with him at an imaginary fireside, or they are too young yet to really appreciate him as they are in the age when spiritual speculation is more attractive. I think that the acclimatisation of Western art and literature of the modern type which has been encouraged here, though not generally, but among the discerning class, made them feel akin to Rossetti already, even before studying him. And the fact that he had a limitation, which was of an Eastern kind, was doubtless a large reason of this immediate reception; as he never tried to conceal his limitation, it always appeared prominently, but, on the other hand, to delight some people (and us) immensely, He is the poet whom we can

only love or hate; and we are glad we love him. It is perfectly singular to say that you can at once understand all his work, as if a single piece of poem, when you have once found how his energy worked, what association he sought for evoking emotion; and you will find in him rarely a surprise when the sound, colour, and form have become in mutual relation with you; in fact, you will get from him what you expect. From such a point of view, he is never a great poet.

However, his attitude as a poet is most admirable; and I should say it is not a question with us whether he was a small poet or a big one. Indeed, his attitude makes us respect and think of him perhaps more than he was in fact; what he lacked we will fill at once with imagination, and when he is too perfect our imagination will make him imperfect to advantage, taking its usual free course, and let us fee his fresh beauty; thus he is a gainer in either case. It goes without saying that he was democratic on the one hand; we see only that cosmopolitan side of beauty and emotion, and allow ourselves to speculate and connect with

him a dear friendship. He is one whom we always find to approach and interesting to listen to; while listening, we grow very enthusiastic, and are extremely glad thinking that he wrote most beautifully what we often thought and could not find a voice for.

A Japanese on the Poet Rossetti

A JAPANESE ON WHISTLER

It is not only the Oriental conception to say that "yes" and "no" are, after all, the same thing; I often find such an assurance in the matter of art. Whistler, for instance. His art of "curious carving of nature and life" had been recognised from the beginning in England by the stronger word of flat denial; Ruskin was the greatest of his admirers. Whistler was clever almost to a fault, and cleverness in art as well as in literature was comparatively a new thing in England. When I say he was clever, I mean it in the sense our Hokusai was clever. His impressionism—Oh! what an arbitrary word!—was something of Hiroshige's; and again, his gracefulness might belong to Utamaro. I do never mean he was influenced by the Japanese artists—no, no; I do not mean it at all. I feel only glad to know that the best art always comes from Nowhere, and never carries a particular badge of East or West; it is a bit of Japanese vanity when we write Whistler down in parallel with our artists. As the question yet remains (perhaps for ever)

to fix the final place for the colour-print artists in our art, we have the same question, we believe, on Whistler; and as we find many reasons to deny the title of greatness to the former, the latter, too, may not have been great. I know how charmed, and again bewildered, we are when we are alone with his work face to face, and we think him almost great; but we cannot help perceiving his smallness when we see his work side by side with the work of some greater artists. There is an artist who suddenly gains from being compared; Whistler, however, is rather sad in comparison. So it is with our artists of the Ukiyoye school—for instance, compare Hokusai (that magician of line and design) with Sesshu, or even Okyo. I am told that Whistler's small physique—he hardly weighed more than 130lb.—was never noticed when he was alone; I think it was so with his art. I agree with Mr. George Moore, who said that Whistler might have been a greater artist if he had been bigger in physique; Mr. Moore says often clever things. To say he was small I do no mean to undervalue him: in fact, smallness or

greatness has not much meaning. His being over-fastidious cannot be overlooked; his perfection in unfinishedness mostly betrays his temperament; he was one of the most studied artists. If it appeared his work was always done from inspiration, it is only that he proved the work which he executed at the odd moment, as we might say, when he least expected it. The remarkable part is that he was always ready for that moment; what energy, what persistence he had to grasp it!

I am told of his habitual indifference to time and place; not only in his personal action, also he made his dream of colour and rhythm at once soar out of them. He never copied Nature or eternity; what he represented on canvas was the very Nature and eternity themselves; it was a sad accident to let his picture bear a particular name of a place. While it does not look like the reality you and I think we see perhaps in Nature, it shows a a sweeping ghostliness ageless and eternal. It is most interesting to read what he said before the Judge at the time of the Ruskin-Whistler case. He remarked:—"If it were

called a view of Cremorne, it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of the beholders. It is an artistic arrangement." Again, he said:—"To some it may represent all that is intended, to others it may represent nothing." That is the real point of his art. A desire and composition are merely a human creation that great Nature never thought of; as Nature never tells you where it was begun, how it was ended, what its idea and what its intention, so Whistler thought his pictures should be. It is perfectly clear to see why he was called a conceited and wilful impostor; but the abusers only exposed at the best their own knowledge, which is a lost thing in Art. What Whistler aimed at was imagination and impulse.

No artist when he is great can separate his personality from his work; as Whistler's personality was unique, whether it was after study or not, so his art was; and we all see his personality behind his work. If you only see the surprise, mystification, confusion, and confounding in his art, I do not think you see the real Whistler at all. It appears, at the first glance, that he was

always playing with his art and also with his friends, and he was so witty and combative; but he was at his heart of hearts most sincere and sad, again like our Hokusai. His strange aloofness in his art as well as in his personality may have been rooted in his Puritan blood; and his Puritanism was touched by the modern cynicism and alternately by the attractive cosmopolitanism; therefore he was both severe and delicate. I do not find a particular reason to call him eccentric, if not in the fact that he was proud in art, uncompromising in intention, eager in aim. If so, he was the most eccentric artist that ever lived.

As there are not two Hogarths, two Velazquez, there will be no other Whistler in the future; just one Whistler is indeed enough. He was his own rule to himself, not belonging to any school already in existence; the school which he established at once was extinguished with his death; that was good. I know that a great art of the world is a creation of prayer, and the great artist is always a sort of priest. But where Whistler lacked the sober reverence towards Nature and Life, he gained, on the

other hand, a touch of democracy; it was he who brought art down to noble artisanship. And his democracy of art was saved from vulgarity by his Puritanic aloofness. It is too common to say that his art was a work of love; but with Whistler it was a true case. Whatever the people happened to say, he was the most enthusiastic admirer of his own work; where is any more strong supporter? And where is the other artist who adored his work of creation as he did? I think that it does little justice to call him a colourist. We have many Oriental artists who never use any other colour but black and grey; yet we call them true colourists. One must see beyond the colour itself, and feel the inner voice of symphony. The colour, I think, was for Whistler only a means to make his picture sing a living song; from such a sense, he was a great colourist. Indeed, he was. And it is almost foolish to attempt to examine the truth or reality of the colour on his canvas; though it may not be a true colour to you, surely it is a poetry or song, which you cannot deny.

A JAPANESE NOTE ON YEATS

We two Japanese went very well with the three Irish at a little café off Tottenham Court Road seven or eight years ago, although the balance often slanted as two of our foreign friends were ladies who, like Yeats' faeries, would ride upon the winds and tide and dance upon the mountain like a flame; they were wild, I remember well, over Yeats whose poetry was as in his own words:

> ". . . ever pacing on the verge of things,
> The phantom beauty in a mist of tears."

One of the ladies sang, or to say better, chanted "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," as she noticed that my mind did not match their enthusiasm; was it not, I wonder, her Irish tactics to make me a captive from a sudden awakening of home thought in my heart? When I made an unconditional surrender to Yeats at least in that song to the delight of all my Irish friends, I was hearing only a famous Japanese "lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore"; I can still recall my feeling of hearing

it in my heart's deep core, while I hurried to my lodging late on that unforgettable night. And when I became better composed under the sympathetic light in my room, my mind like a ship on the waves deathless and timeless or freeborn leaves enraptured in the quiet of the skies, drifted slowly into the adventure of comparison-making between the literatures Oriental and Irish; Yeats' song on Innisfree made me at once think of T'ao Yuan-ming of the Tsin Dynasty of China (A.D. 365-427) whose famous ode, "Homeward Return" sounds in my opinion more Celtic than any other old Chinese poem. Celtic temperament in ancient China, you ask? Oh, yes, a good deal of it. Not only the Saxons, but also the old Chinese, did indeed evoke poetry through the Celtic flames blown by the dove-gray wind, no matter where the Chinese got it; there is nothing strange to compare the ancient Oriental poetry with Yeats of the present time, because both of them are of the language very old and very new like the lonely face of a dream. I might say it was Yuan-ming's weakness that he was only able to find poetry in the emphasising of his own life,

unlike Yeats and his Irish colleagues to whom Art or Imagination in another word was first, and Life followed after; "Homeward Return" would not have existed, I think, if Yuan-ming had not been obliged to appear in the regular robe proper to his rank of magistrate at a certain function, only to make his freedom-loving soul rebel and exclaim that "he could not crook the hinges of his back for five pecks of rice a day," and to resign his office at once after holding the post for only eighty-three days. Not only do I read in his resignation his misery of heart on seeing the speedy fall of his Tsin Dynasty and the gradual rise of the Liu Sung, but I see in his ode that he was after all a Chinese pessimist and not a Celt, whose pessimism always makes a desperate revolt under the peace and content, whose surrender to Nature is more to her fact itself than the mystery she inspires, when he finishes the famous ode as follows:

> "I will whistle along the eastern hill,
> By the clear rivulet weave my song:
> Let my allotted span work its own way at will.
> I will enjoy my fate . . . Oh, how can I doubt it?"

My responsiveness to the modern Irish litera-

ture chiefly through Yeats and two or three others, the singers of the Unseen and Passionate Dreams, is from the sudden awakening of Celtic temperament in my Japanese mind. The comparative study of the Japanese poetical characteristics with those of the Irish people would be interesting, because it will make it clear how the spontaneity of the real Japanese hearts and imaginations, indeed quite Celtic, has been evoked and crooked and even ruined by the Chinese literature of the Toang and Sung dynasties sadly hardened by the moral finiteness, and also by the Buddhism whose despotic counsel often discouraged imagination, till we see to-day only the fragmentary remains, for instance, in the folk-songs which flow like a streaming flame upon the air. I know that all the Japanese poets ancient and modern went into a Celtic invocation, when they were alone with the sad melody of Nature and felt the intimacy of human destiny; take Saigyo at random, the wandering priest-poet of the early twelfth century, whose melancholy cry across the seas and time is most real, because, to use Matthew Arnold's phrase, of its "passionate,

turbulent, indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact." Here is one of my beloved *uta*-poems of his which it is said he wrote at a certain shrine:

> "Know I not at all who is within,
> But from the heart of gratitude,
> My tears fall,
> Again my tears fall, . . ."

Although it may sound strange, it is true that Saigyo failed as a poet, in my opinion, through his hatred of life and the world (how many hundred Western poets fail through their love of the World and Life), because not from impulse and dream like Yeats, but I might say from the Buddhistic superstition and motive he looked upon the whisper and beauty far beyond time and winds. It was the Chinese classics and Buddhism that weakened our Japanese poetry in most cases; it is not difficult to see what we shall lose fundamentally from coming, as we have come to-day, face to face with the Western literature. When I admire the Irish literature as I do, it is in its independent aloofness from the others, sad but pleasing like an elegy heard across the seas of the infinite, with

all the joys pointing to life that always glistens with the pain of destiny; in its telling of visions and numberless dreams, I see the passionate flame burning to Eternity and deathlessness, its wit and humour (Oh, that famous Irish characteristic) make me think that laughter or smile is certainly older, at least wiser than tears. How often I wonder at its insular energy objecting to the literary encroachment of a different element, oh, what a pure, proud, lonely, defiant spirit! I know that such a literary strength was gained perhaps at the heavy cost of the political sacrifice of the country; is it a piece of cynicism when we thank the English solidarity which had a great hand in the formation of the so-called Irish literature?

It was, I confess, the very beauty of Yeats' work of poetry, "The Rose" with that song on the "Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Wind Among the Reeds" with the simple fiddler of Dooney who set the people to "dance like a wave of the sea," that I wholly gave up, some eight years ago when I was in London, my plan to go to Ireland for my study of the Celtic

characteristics, because William B. Yeats was, I thought, bigger than Ireland herself, and what I was afraid of was the disillusionment; it was not the immediate question with me to know how much Celtic would be left if Yeats were taken out from his poetry. I read somewhere his words of discontent with his early poems as triviality or sentimentality; I have my opinion to feel only sorry for a poet who was sane and wise from the beginning. The time when one could act even silly would be doubly dear in one's after-reflection; Yeats' word of discontent may not be the exact word; what a pity even the poet, particularly when he is Irish, has had an occasion or two to play that sad art of criticism upon his own work. I see the sorrow at once universal, with no particular shape, commingled with the whisper and sigh of days and nature in quite a picturesque accentuation, in his early work, as if in my poetry of youth, at the moment when he might have thought, again as in my case, it was a spiritual flight to lose his own nationality, and that the imitation in the best sense or the joining to one indomitable general mood of

youth was a poetical passport; it is excusable, I dare say, when we find his head in a cloud-hand in many pieces of "The Rose," where he bartered his emotion for the intellect. I am glad to hear that he returned lately to the common thought of his people; it may be a gratification for his Irish patriotism if it served to remind him of Mangan and Davis. That patriotism is another link between the Irish and the Japanese. It was from the very sense of patriotism, in truth, that "Kathleen Ni Hoolihan" was thought to be actable even in Japan; but when it failed, it was from its general symbolism, because we Japanese are able to think of patriotism only physically.

OSCAR WILDE

LET me say that it was Wilde himself who misunderstood him before the large world was pleased to misunderstand him; he who found joy in his artistic self-deception, that is in the creation of a false self that would pass as the real self, had at last to cry over fate when from the realization of his being a social outcast he exclaimed: "If after I am free a friend of mine gave a feast and did not invite me to it, I should not mind a bit. I can be perfectly happy by myself. With freedom, flowers, books and the moon, who could not be perfectly happy?" Indeed the time when he found that the real self is alone worthy and kind came to him too late.

I always thought that he was a moralist (who among the English authors, I should like to know, is not a moralist?), even a great moralist, from the reason that, like a pretty woman who always conceals her thoughts most beloved, he tried, often even with literary desperation, to hide the fact of his being a moralist; and he was very brilliant and quite distinguished par-

ticularly in the places where he was greatly suspected. He himself was sometimes obliged to confess it, when he was maddened and excited in his most eventful literary life, as I see, for instance, in his Letters on Dorian Gray addressed to the editor of the St. James' Gazette or Somebody; and I will call "De Profundis" one of the greatest books of morality the modern age has produced. If a hypocrite were to conceal his true character rather than to claim something he has not, wilde is in truth the first person to be entitled a literary hypocrite. There is a long history of hypocricy in England, that is more or less the history of English society artificially created, not naturally grown; when I make him represent the worst side, my mind dwells on his lack of sincerity at least in his early days. Although his cleverness was quite significant, it seems that he was ignorant of the fact that his way of concealing was after all the way of revealing; and the literary tricks or devices he played on us (and he was playing them on himself) are, to say the least, the most shabby part. When he talked on art and beauty, he was rather vague and

always too talkative; and when he talked on himself, no greater bore than he could be found in all literature West or East. In a word he is often unbearable to our Japanese mind. I think it is safe to say from the Japanese viewpoint that the real artist and true aesthete will never talk so much about his art and aestheticism; although he meant to bring the creative possibility of general men of letters to a higher plane by sheer force of cleverness, his unavailing service proved that not cleverness in any form, but the magic of humanity and love itself alone have such a power. We have a Japanese word *kusai* which, though it is too commonplace a word, will be used of art or writing; *kusai* means "It smells too strong." Indeed Wilde's work, whether good or bad, altogether smells too strong perhaps through his lack of reflective modesty or through having too much audacity; and let me say that he often smelled bad; that is why I failed to make my Japanese mind interested in him before. I read somewhere in "De Profundis": "The gods had given me almost everything. I had genius, a distinguished name, high social

position, brilliancy, intellectual daring; I made art a philosophy, and philosophy an art: I altered the minds of men and the colour of things: there was nothing I said or did that did not make people wonder."—Why, such is the language of youthful vulgarity. I admit his words that he created a new literature; but what he appears to have created in letters will be found at once to be nothing but the old truth or wisdom or beauty newly spoken. "And for the rest," I shall exclaim, "never would I care." His way of saying was in fact quite creditable; but when I think what a bad influence he had and is still having on younger tired brains by his acrobatic superficiality, I more blame and deny him than praise and accept him.

However, I am happy to see that his vogue is spreading its wide wings even in this far-away Japan; what I like to dwell on is that the English society, not only the English reading public, seems to have finally realized what it inflicted on him, and looks as if, though rather late, it wished to atone. Wilde says in a certain part of "De Profundis": "I can claim

on my side that if I realize what I have suffered, society should realize what it has inflicted on me; and that there should be no bitterness or hate on either side." I take it as his femininity when he said he had no hatred for society and really meant the reverse; and again as his hatred was not small, he wished to forget all about it. I read somewhere, although I forget just where, he said that the world will only remember you by what you did last; is there any greater sarcasm than that? It was his femininity that made him reveal his strength of suffering in his last days; again like a woman, he was born a spectator till suddenly he found himself to be an actor taking a shameful tragic rôle. In calling woman paradoxical I mean that Wilde was paradoxical. He who began his life with no real knowledge of the world and life, died as the master of it under the baptism of sorrow. Sorrow and humanity, both of them, are feminine; I think it is not necessary to prove with examples that "De Profundis" is a great feminine cry. I cannot be so heartless as to criticize it as mere literature.

I often reflect upon the matter of Wilde's imprisonment, and wonder if it was not also the kindness of Great Nature to teach him the lesson of humanity; however, I cannot help feeling she was rather cruel when he was forced to learn it through Humility. He says: "As I found it, I want to keep it. I must do so. It is the one thing that has in it the elements of life, of a new life, a *Vita Nuova* for me." And he declares: "And the first thing that I have got to do is to free myself from any possible bitterness of feeling against the world." It is from such language that I admit even the name of greatness for Wilde, and am glad to forget the greater parts of stories, plays, poems and essays which always tired me; it is true that, if he had been the man who understood life and humanity as he did in the later dates, he would have written great books already in his younger age; but, as I said before, when he soared into the higher, nobler realization of his real self, his mind and strength had gone too far down and were too crushed for actual rising. Let me say here that he began life as an artist (to use his beloved word) and died,

glad to say, as a man; he who entered into prison as a mere *litterateur* left there as a Life.

No doubt he suffered in prison more and deeper than we Japanese fancy; if he had been a Japanese to whom visible beauty of Nature and life are not so attractive, he would have found at once the edifice of sanctuary undisturbed and serene under whose blessing his thoughts would have entered into philosophy and song; but he was far more physical indeed. How he suffered, I can well imagine, before he got his spiritual triumph. When I say that he was as a playwright, far below, for instance, Bernard Shaw, I am thinking of the fact that he was unable, at least before he was put in prison, to see the world and life with the naked eyes of man real and true; are there not, as some critic pleases to point out, places where he seems to use again his old silly trick of making a literature from his own misfortune or casuality or tragedy even in "De Profundis"? And again as an essayist, I should say that Chesterton is not inferior to Wilde; that the former, unlike the latter, has no particular aesthetic pretension pleases me immensely. As

you know, paradox-making as only a sport or game quite harmless. It is not necessary to go into any long discussion of Wilde's merit as a poet or novelist. There is no denying that he was one of the most unique figures of the modern age; and his being an English writer of third rate makes us at once intimate and familiar, as we are only third rate human beings at our best.

WHAT IS THE *HOKKU* POEM?

PARTLY to make my annual settlement at the end of the year, at least my spiritual settlement, one month later, as the villagers are still attached to the old lunar calendar, mainly to hunt after the plum-blossoms (why, hunting is the proper word), although I knew it was only a few weeks since the chrysanthemums turned to dust, I left cold Tokyo in December towards Atami where the glad laughing sunlight of Spring always arrives first across the seas. You may call me mad or fantastic if you will, when I tell you that I journeyed one hundred miles for just an early sight of the flowers; that early sight indeed makes my ephemeral life worth living. I was glad, when I reached Atami, to find that my flower exploration was started well, though even at Atami the season was a little early for it; when the plum trees in the well-known "Plum Forest" there, a week or ten days later, began to smile up to the skies and sunlight (and to me), I carried my world-wearied soul every day out under their shade, and talked with them in the silence that was

beyond the world and humanity. I was called, when I was almost forgetting human speech, back to Tokyo again to pay life's toll, where I was at once besieged by the same winter cold; worse than that, I was forced to settle my yearly account from which I had attempted to escape some twenty days before. My little adonis davurica, to use the botanical name, or the Fortune Longevity Grass at the southern window of my home was not yet in bloom; I was again obliged to shut myself within the room with a little brazier on whose ashes I could write and rewrite the pages from the Songs of Innocence, and to look happy travelling before Fuji Mountain's presence in Hiroshige's pictures. But it happend one morning when I was washing my face in my garden (oh, where's yester year's morning-glory?) that the very first note of a nightingale made me raise my face at once to the plum tree where two or three blossoms had just begun to break; "At last, Spring even to Tokyo," I exclaimed. I made a habit from then to sit on the balcony facing the garden when the sunlight fell there with all heart and soul and to count the blossoms

every day ; I recall here to my mind the following seventeen-syllable *hokku* poem :

> "One blossom of the plum—
> Yes, as much as that one blossom, every day,
> Have we of Spring's warmth."

It might be from the conditions of my impaired health of late that such a little peom as the above makes a strong impression on my mind ; indeed, I never felt before as this year, the kindness of the sunlight and the joy of spring. I declare myself to be an adherent of this *hokku* poem in whose gem-small form of utterance our Japanese poets were able to express their understanding of Nature, better than that, to sing or chant their longing or wonder or adoration towards Mother Nature ; to call the *hokku* poem suggestive is almost wrong, although it has become a recent fashion for the Western critics to interpret, not only this *hokku* but all Japanese poetry (even my work included) by that one word, because the *hokku* poem itself is distictly clear-cut like a diamond or star, never mystified by any cloud or mist like Truth or Beauty of Keats' understanding. It is all very well if you

have a suggestive attitude of mind in reading it; I say that the star itself has almost no share in the creation of a condition even when your dream or vision is gained through its beauty. I am only pleased to know that the star had such an influence upon you; and I am willing to endorse you when you say the *hokku* poem is suggestive in the same sense that truth and humanity are suggestive. But I can say myself as a poet (am I too bold to claim that word?) that your poem would certainly end in artificiality if you start out to be suggestive from the beginning; I value the *hokku* poem, at least some of them, because of its own truth and humanity simple and plain. Let me say for once and all there is no word in so common use by Western critics as suggestive, which makes more mischief than enlightenment, although they mean it quite simply, of course, to be a new force or salvation; I apologise to you for my digression when I say that no critic is necessary for this world of poetry. Who will criticise Truth or Humanity? I always thought that the most beautiful flowers grow close to the ground, and they need no hundred

petals for expressing their own beauty; how can you call it real poetry if you cannot tell it by a few words? Therefore these seventeen syllables are just enough at least to our Japanese mind. And if you cannot express all by one *hokku*, then you can say it in many *hokkus;* yes, that is all.

I confess that I secretly desired to become a *hokku* poet in my younger days, that is now twenty years ago, and I used to put the *hokku* collection of Basho or Buson with Spencer's Education in the same drawer of my desk; what did Spencer mean, you might wonder, for a boy of sixteen or seventeen? I myself wonder to-day about it when I look back on it; but it was the younger day of new Japan when even we boys thought to educate others before being educated ourselves (there was Spencer's Education), and we wished to swallow all the Western wisdom and philosophy, Spencer or Darwin or what else, at a gulp. I used to pass through Shiba Park famous for the Sleeping Houses of the Feudal Princes and also for the pine forest towering over the mortality and age, towards my school at Mita, whither to-day

of twenty years later I turn my steps again to tell the Japanese students about the English poets born in the golden clime or other clime; and I often looked up with irresistible longing of heart, to a little cottage on a hill in this sacred park where Yeiki Kikakudo, the descendant of the famous *hokku* poet Kikaku in poetical lineage, used to live in his seventieth year. I cannot recollect now exactly how I happened to call on him one night except from my impulse and determination that my meeting with him was thought necessary for my poetical development; it was the night of *meigetsu*, the full moon of September, when many wanderers like myself, moths restless after soul's sensation, could be seen in the park through the shadows of trees. The little house, I mean that of Master Yeiki, so small that it might be comfortably put in any ordinary-sized Western drawing-room, was deadly silent with no light lighted; I thought at once that it was the poet's beautiful consideration towards the moon whose heavenly light, not being disturbed by any earthly lamp, might thus have full sway. I met the old poet sitting on the step under the golden

shower of the light, when I climbed up to his house, he led me within the house where the all open *shoji* doors welcomed the moon with old-fashioned hospitality. Indeed that should be the way to treat the celestial guest; when you observe how the Japanese moonlight crawls in with its fairy-like golden steps, you will wonder how humanised it is here. We two, young and old, sat silent, leaving all the talk to the breezes which carried down the moon's autumnal message; the light fell on the hanging at the *tokonoma* whereon I read the following *hokku* poem:

"Autumn's full moon:
Lo, the shadows of a pine tree
Upon the mats!"

Really it was my first opportunity to observe the full beauty of the light and shadow, more the beauty of the shadow in fact far more luminous than the light itself, with such a decorativeness, particularly when it stamped the dustless mats as a dragon-shaped ageless pine tree; I thanked Kikaku, the author of the above lines, for giving me just the point where

to find the natural beauty, on which my imagination should have play enough. I bowed to the Poet Yeiki for good-night, and thanked him for the most interesting talk, although we had spoken scarcely a word, but I was perfectly tickled in delight as already then the old story of Emerson and Carlyle who had a happy chat in silence was known to me. When I left him, the moon was quite high, under whose golden blessing all the trees and birds hurried to dream; it was exactly such a night on which only two or three year ago I wrote the following lines:

"Across the song of night and moon,
(O perfume of perfumes!)
My soul, as a wind
Whose heart's too full to sing,
Only roams astray . . ."

Indeed, how I wandered that night, now thinking of this poet, then on that *hokku* poem; I clearly remember it was the very night that I felt fully the beauty of the following impromptu in *hokku* by Basho:

"Shall I knock
At Miidera Temple's gate?
Ah, moon of to-night!"

Suppose you stand at that temple's gate high upon the hill lapped and again lapped by the slow water, with your dreamy face towards this Lake Biwa in the shape of a biwa-lute, which, as a certain poetess has written, "like a shell of white lies dropped by the passing day." I am sure you will feel yourself to be a god or goddess in the beginning of the world as in the Japanese mythology, who by accident or mystery has risen above the opalescent mists which softly cover the earth of later night.

I did not forget to carry with me the *hokku* collection of Basho or Buson or some other poet in my American life, even when I did the so-called tramp life in 1896-1898 through the California field full of buttercups, by the mountain where the cypress trees beckoned my soul to fly, not merely because the thought of home and longing for it was then my only comfort, but more because by the blessing of the book, I mean the *hokku* book, I entered straight into the great heart of Nature; when I left the Pacific Slope in later years towards the Eastern cities built by the modern civilisation and machineries, I suddenly thought I had lost the

secret understanding of the *hokku* poems born in Japan, insignificant like a lakeside reed and irresponsible like a dragon-fly; how could you properly understand, for instance, the following *hokku* poem in New York of skyscrapers and automobiles:

> "A cloud of flowers!
> Is it the bell of Uyeno
> Or that of Asakusa?'

The poet, by the way Basho, means the cloud of flowers, of course, in Mukojima of Tokyo, whose odorous profusion shuts out every prospect and thought of geographical sense, of East or West; listen to the bell ringing from the distance! Does it come from the temple of Uyeno or Asakusa? Why, it is the poem of a Spring picture of the river Sumida.

Although I was quite loyal to this seventeen syllable form of Japanese poetry during many years of my foreign wandering, I had scarcely any moment to write a *hokku* in original Japanese or English, till the day when I most abruptly awoke in 1902 to the noise of Charing Cross where I wrote as follows:

"Tell me the street to Heaven.
This? Or that? Oh, which?
What webs of streets!"

And it was by Westminster Bridge where I heard the evening chime that I wrote again in *hokku* which appears, when translated, as follows:

"Is it, Oh, list!
The great voice of Judgement Day?
So runs Thames, so runs my Life."

In September of 1904, I returned home; the tender silken autumnal rain that was Japanese poetry, and my elder brother welcomed me (what a ghost tired and pale I was then), and I was taken to his house in the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo to wash off my foreign dust and slowly renew my old acquaintance with things Japanese; Oh, that memorable first night after thirteen years abroad! I spent it alone in the upstairs room where I was left to sleep. I did not fall asleep for many many hours as my back already began to ache from lying on the floor in the Japanese fashion; and my nostrils could not make themselves free from a strange

Japanese smell, indeed the soy smell, which I thought was crawling from the kitchen. As I said, the rain dropped quite incessantly; the lamplight burned feebly; and I was alone. Listen! What was that I heard? Well, it was a cricket singing under the roof or behind the hanging at the *tokonoma*. I exclaimed then: "Was it possible to hear the cricket in the very centre of the metropolis?" My mind at once recalled the following *hokku* poem by Issa:

"Let me turn over,
Pray, go away,
Oh my cricket!"

My thought dwelt for a long while that night upon Issa, the *hokku* poet at the mountainside of Shinshu, and his shabby hut "of clay and wattles made" where he indeed lived with the insects, practically sharing his house with them; whenever I read him, the first thing to strike me is his simple sympathy with a small living thing like a butterfly or this cricket, that was in truth the sure proof of his being a poet. Although I had often read the above poem, I can say

that I never felt its humanity so keenly as that night.

When the late Mr. Aston published A History of Japanese Literature quite many years ago, I know that the part about Basho, the greatest *hokku* poet of the seventeenth century, and the *hokku* poems in general, did not make a proper impression on the Western mind. And here I have no particular intention to force on your appreciation with this Japanese form of poetry; this article is only to express my own love for it. When we say that the East is the same as the West, we mean that the West is as different from the East as the East is from the West; how could you understand us through and through? Poetry is the most difficult art; it will lose the greater part of its significance when parted from its background and the circumstances from which it spring forth. I should like to ask who in the West will be able to think the following *hokku* poem the greatest of its kind as we Japanee once thought:

"On a withered twig,
Lo, the crow is sitting there,
Oh, this Autumn eve!"

Even to us, I confess, this solitariness of a Japanese Autumn evening with the crow crying monotonously on the tree is growing lately less impressive, when in fact as to-day the crows become scarce before the factories and smoke ; and our modern heterogeneous minds are beginning to turn somewhere else.

AGAIN ON *HOKKU*

THE word "epigram" is no right word (and there's no right word at all) for *Hokku*, the seventeen syllable poem of Japan, just as overcoat is not the word for our *haori*. "That is good," I exclaimed in spite of myself, when I found this comparison to begin my article. We know that *haori* is more, or less, according to your attitude, than the overcoat of Western garb which rises and falls with practical service; when I say more, I mean that our Japanese *haori* is unlike the Western overcoat, a piece of art and besides, a symbol of rite, as its usefulness appears often when it means practically nothing. If I rightly understand the word epigram, it is or at least looks to have one object, like that overcoat of practical use, to express something, a Cathay of thought or not, before itself; its beauty, if it has any, is like that of a *netsuke* or *okimono* carved in ivory or wood, decorative at the best. But what our *hokku* aims at is, like the *haori* of silk or crepe, a usefulness of uselessness, not what it expresses but how it expresses itself spiritually; its real

value is not in its physical directness but in its psychological indirectness. To use a simile, it is like a dew upon lotus leaves of green, or under maple leaves of red, which, although it is nothing but a trifling drop of water, shines, glitters and sparkles now pearl-white, then amethyst-blue, again ruby-red, according to the time of day and situation; better still to say, this *hokku* is like a spider-thread laden with the white summer dews, swaying among the branches of a tree like an often invisible ghost in air, on the perfect balance; that sway indeed, not the thread itself, is the beauty of our seventeen syllable poem.

I cannot forget Mrs. N. S. who came to see me at the poppy-covered mountainside of California one morning, now almost seventeen years ago; what I cannot forget chiefly about that morning is her story that she made a round-about way in entering into my garden as the little proper path had been blocked by a spider-net thick with diamonds. I exclaimed then as I do often to-day: "Such a dear sweet soul (that could not dare break that silvery thread) would be the very soul who will appreciate our

hokku." What do you say, if there is one, suppose, who brings down the spider-net and attempts to hang it up in another place? Is it not exactly the case with a translator of Japanese poem, *hokku* or *uta*, whatever it be? To use another expression, what would you say if somebody ventured to imitate with someone's fountain pen the Japanese picture drawn with the bamboo brush and incensed Indian ink? Is it not again the exact case with the translator like Mr. William N. Porter in A Year of Japanese Epigrams?

We confess that we have shown, to speak rather bluntly, very little satisfaction even with the translations of Prof. Chamberlain and the late Mr. Aston; when I say that I was perfectly amazed at Mr. Porter's audacity in his sense of curiosity, I hope that my words will never be taken as sarcasm. With due respect, I dare say that nearly all things of that book leave something to be desired for our Japanese mind, or to say more true, have something too much that we do not find in the original, as a result they only weaken, confuse and trouble the real atmosphere; while perhaps, it means

certainly that the English mind is differently rooted from the Japanese mind, even in the matter of poetry which is said to have no East or West. When I appear to unkindly expose Mr. Porter's defects (excuse my careless use of word) to the light, that is from my anxiety to make this Japanese poetry properly understood. To take a poem or two from his book at random:

Uzumibi ya
Kabe ni wa kyaku (not kaku) no
Kage-boshi. Basho.

Mr. Porter translates it as follows:

"Alas! My fire is out,
And there's a shadow on the wall—
A visitor, no doubt.

I should like to know who would ever think of the above as poetry, even poor poetry, in his reading of it in one breath; what does "no doubt" (which the original hasn't) mean except that it rhymes with the first line; and the rhyme cheapens the poetry at least to the Japanese mind from the reason of its English conventionality. The first line of the original is not "my

fire is out;" on the contrary, it means that the fire, of course the charcoal fire, is buried under the ashes. The poem is a poem of winter night which becomes late, and when a charcoal fire already small grows still dearer as it is more cold without, perhaps windy; now the talk of the guest or visitor (lo, his sad lone shadow on the wall) and the master poet stops, then it starts again, like a little stream hidden under the grasses; and the desolation of the advanced night intensifies the sadness of the house, doubtless Basho An whose small body is wrapped by a few large leaves of Basho's beloved banana tree in the garden. You must know, before you attempt to understand it, a few points of the poet's characteristics, above all, the way of his living, and the general aspect of his house, I mean Basho An, the poetical poverty of which will be seen from the fact that he made a big hole in the wall to place a tiny Buddha statue as he had no place to enshrine it; not only this Basho's *hokkus*, nearly all the seventeen-syllable poems that were produced in the early age, you will find difficult to understand when separated from the circumstances

and background from which they were born, to use a simile, like a dew born out of the deepest heart of dawn.

It is not my purpose here to criticise and examine Mr. Porter's translation to satisfy my fastidious heart of minuteness-loving; let it suffice to say that the *hokku* is not a poetry to be rightly appreciated by people in the West who lie by the comfortable fire in Winter, or under an electric fan in Summer, because it was originally written beside a paper *shoji* door or upon the strow mats. We have a saying: "Better to leave the *renge* flowers in their own wild plain;" it suggest quite many things, but what it impresses me most is that you should admire things, flowers or pictures or what not, in their own proper place. To translate *hokku* or any other Japanese poem into English rarely does justice to the original; it is a thankless task at the best. I myself was a *hokku* student since I was fifteen or sixteen years old; during many years of my Western life, now amid the California forest, then by the skyscrapers of New York, again in the London 'bus, I often, tried to translate the *hokkus* of our old masters

but I gave up my hope when I had written the following in English :

> " My Love's lengthened hair
> Swings o'er me from Heaven's gate :
> Lo, Evening's shadow ! "

It was in London, to say more particularly, Hyde Park, that I wrote the above *hokku* in English, where I walked slowly, my mind being filled with the thought of the long hair of Rossetti's woman as I perhaps had visited Tate's Gallery that afternoon ; pray, believe me when I say the dusk that descended from the sky swung like that lengthened hair. I exclaimed then : " What use to try the impossibility in translation, when I have a moment to feel a *hokku* feeling and write about it in English ?" Although I had only a few such moments in the past, my decision not to translate *hokku* into English is unchanged. Let me wait patiently for a moment to come when I become a *hokku* poet in my beloved English.

ON POETRY

I KEEP my eyes unswervingly upon poetry (do you ask me what is poetry?)—if I succeed in poetry it is my only secret. It is common enough to say that, but it is least understood even among the so-called poets. To fix my sharp attention is not the only way of perceiving the object (I never think, however, of poetry as my whole object in life); but my attention is most keen when my power of inattention fully sways. You have to learn that most difficult art how to be inattentive; it is perfectly arbitrary to say that one gets his poetry at the unexpected moment. All of my practice is spent in that very inattention. When my inattention is all well developed I can keep my unswerving eye perfectly upon poetry. I say again that when I forget poetry it is the time when I am wholly with poetry. I always fail to write poetry when I think I will write it.

And when I perfectly perceive the real poetry, I never think I am before its presence; because the poetry and I are all one. At that moment, the sensations and impressions (I feel

them when the high water mark is not yet attained) at once subside; and only the poetry that is the real 'I' remains. Indeed, to gain the true poetry is the question of one's nerve; and I say also that you cannot have the true poetry with that nerve itself; I mean that you can have the poetry when your nerve becomes non-nerve. And you must let the poetry write itself; I mean that you must get your own true self. That is my secret if I have any.

Poetry is so interesting at least in my case, because it makes me find my own self; it is so important, because it teaches me the real proportion between me and Nature. It is so educative and edifying, because it makes me philosophical; to be philosophical is the very way to build one's character, because it makes one gain silence, for silence is the real foundation of character.

AGAIN ON POETRY

"THOSE books," I say to myself, looking on the four volumes of my own poems, "I dare claim to be real poetry because they were in truth born out of my hatred, that is when my love of poetry at once grew intense and turned to the hatred of poetry." Oh, that moment, indeed, of the true love and hatred, that very moment, there was my own poetry for once and forever; how I feared to look back and read again the poems when they were once done, or to be looked back upon by those poems, as if they were the sins I had committed from fascination, of which I was frightened and repented. That is my confession; and you might call the poems of mine the real self-revelation of my own soul full of love of poetry, that is to say, full of hatred of poetry, provided that world "self-revelation" means more than the common use. I should say that the man who is able to hate poetry is far better qualified even as a mere reader to become the true lover of poetry; how tired I am to hear one say that he loves poetry with all his heart and soul.

That only sounds to me as a jest at the best. I think there is a deeper truth in one's saying how he hates poetry; and since I know that the true love comes forth from the true hatred, and the love and hatred are twin brothers or sisters, I regard the hater of poetry as my real friend. Therefore I say loudly: "Come to me those who hate poetry, I will tell them how I as a poet, hate the poetry; and let us, why, through the virtue of that hatred, make the poetry reveal its real worth."

When Rossetti found the interpretation of love in Beauty, he failed to explain, from his vagueness of mind or baffling cleverness, what was that Beauty; and he, like John Keats before him of course, misled the small poets, indeed thousands of them, making them believe in Beauty (whatever it was) as their guiding star. I think that Ruskin was more sane in using it as the revealer of the defects of our commonplace life; what defects, I should like to know, we have in our life! What I am going to say is that it is that Beauty or, let me say, Poetry, to reveal the beauty or perfection of our material life and order; when I write

my own poem, it is when I long for and adore my commonplace life whereto I hasten back. I am the lover of material order; that love grows enriched from the fact of my having the most poetical moment which, as I said before, is so dear that I hate it. Oh, let me hate and hate Poetry, because to hate it is to love it again. Oh, let me make my commonplace life important; it is, is it not, that to make it important is to make my own life important?

THE MORNING FANCY

It should begin with the opening of the *shoji* here. I pushed them apart. I should see the lotus bud of Fuji, singing the "swan-like rhapsody of dying night," from my garden, if it were a Japanese fiction written by a foreigner; I do not see it from here. Never mind! I can be pretty well off without seeing it this morning. Thank God, I have even a quite comfortable peace. So I opened my garden *shoji*. I went straight into dream from the reading of a book of poems by a certain lady, last night; during the whole night my mind was touched by the perfumes down a certain lane, now and then deliciously startled by a phantom that came back from a forgotten shade; and I am still dreaming this morning. I asked my servant to burn the incense which softly began to flap towards me as a tiny, pearl-winged butterfly tantalising many flowers. The incense tantalised my soul of fancy; my fancy grew irritated, and presently mad; it tried to chase it away again and again. May it not be the gray-robed ghost of something forgotten haunting my memory?

"I know you ghost of some lone, delicate hour,
Long-gone but unforget,
Wherein I had for guerden and dower,
That one thing I have not."

It was a white lilac that inspired the lady to write the lines—yes, the lilac tree. Shall I plant it in my garden, although I have no particular faith in flowers in a Japanese garden? "We moderns have only flowers, but not gardens," I often said; and I even went on to declare that we must protest against such a state of things. However, I should be glad to have one or two lilacs, not in the garden, but somewhere beyond my sight, their old perfumes sailing towards me over the grayness.

As I said, I opened the *shoji* apart and sat on the verandah, sipping tea; from the cup my soul of fancy drank the youthfulness and love of these early summer days when every tree has changed its crimson-sleeved flower dress to a green coat. I always thought that green is a symbol of youth, and also of a maturing love. So this early Summer is more to my heart than Spring. It is with these summer days that the breeze can spread its musical wings freely. O

breeze terribly cursed by us and Spring in April—poor musician in air. Play on now, we welcome you really from our hearts! I am perfectly comfortable this morning. A moment ago I resolved that I would stop writing books; I would convert myself into a reader,—well that is to say, when I have time. And this morning I am extremely happy in a sort of dream on this verandah. I looked upon the sky, and found a few birds; my own soul followed after them. The sun began to cast a strong light.

"To-day my soul's a dragon-fly."
The world a awaying reed."

I thought presently about garden-making; and now declared that the garden had nothing to do with nature, or not much. Those people are silly, I thought, who think that they can make a garden with a few scraps of what is vaguely called Nature, closed in with a wall or fence. Oh, no! There must be primarily the art of man; veil or clothe it with the breath of nature; let us read the art of man as well as that of Nature,—the unmistakable suggestion of humanity under the solitary breath of Nature.

And my ideal garden should be silent. I am sure you will regard the voice as a piece of vulgarity when you are acquainted with the sweetness of silence. So a few trees I will have in my garden. But there must be a somewhat fantastic shape of stone under any circumstances. And one stone lantern, perhaps? The garden must be a poetry whose voice is suggestion or memory itself; and I will try to gather there the meaning fit for my own fancy. But when shall I have my ideal Japanese garden?—Oh, my garden dark-robed and silent as a Buddha priest.

INSULARITY

Our thoughts and emotions are only the continuation of the thoughts and emotions of our ancestors, which were often left hidden, unexpressed, happily for us, but always in existence, like the touch of air; while our thoughts may appear so sudden, frighteningly new, they have somewhere a link, sure like the stars, if you have eyes to see, with those of our progenitors. We value what the ancestors expressed, because we can read at the same time what they left unexpressed. I have no hesitation to say that the poets who sing like Byron or that golden-tongued Tennyson are admirable; but the good modern poets, no particular names mentioned, are unique at least on account of their inability (ability perhaps) in singing. It takes much talent to describe the outward beauty, and, true to say, even some original gift to appreciate it; but your real courage will be proved in your entire loss of desire of outward things. One can be taught by another how to see and understand the outward beauty, but there's hardly any guidance

in the invisible matter, and you are your own guide, alone in the world, in your change from the visible to the spiritual. It is easy to change your dress and hat according to the season and style ; but the outside attire, even the best kind, is of no avail for your spiritual change. It is natural course to enter the invisible from the visible, as you step into night from day ; but you must let it come after having enough satisfaction of the outward things. The mellow perfection of the night only comes after all the splendour of the sun.

As for me, I have no strong love with the outward things, and always take a deep delight in the little inward world—the largest world perhaps—of my creation, and rarely sing the visible beauty. Is it because I am philosophical? Perhaps I am, without knowing it at all. Is it because I am somewhat logical? Perhaps I am, although people (I included) do not notice it. One thing I can say with much faith is that it takes a great energy to gain an assertion, and a tireless persistence to be content with the invisible things. You must fully understand the beauty of life, if you want to see the beauty of

death; and life will be more beautiful from the reason of contrast with death. And death, again from the contrast with life, will be more tender in pathos, more subtle in rhythm. My song is always with the falling leaves and the dying day.

I am not ready to say such is the poetry of modern Japanese poests; it is so at least with some of them. And it is a most striking contrast with the material civilisation of present Japan, which was brought at once from the West; the West, strangely enough, sent us at the same time her spiritual literature under the arbitrary name of symbolism. Now, that symbolism is not a new thing at all; for us, it is a continuation, of course with much modification, of our old thoughts and emotions. It is interesting to note that it came here when we were much criticised as matelialists without capacity of understanding any spiritual beauty. As somebody says, the real modern civilisation of Japan is nothing but the old civilisation which has changed its form; and I say that the true new literature is, indeed, the old literature, baptised in a Western temple. We have led,

for a thousand years, our insular lives ; we have been materially poor (many thanks for that poverty), and then we found it quite easy to commune with our minds. As the reality was never so splendid, we were obliged to seek satisfaction in dream ; as we could not sing so well, we learned the art how to sing in silence, the art how to leave unsung. Poetry was never a criticism of life in Japan, as it was for one time in the West; but it was the words of adoration or love of nature and life. It is only the modern note to make the most of literature and life ; it is, I dare say, from the hidden desire to value the no-literature and death more than the literature and life themselves.

We must not lose our insularity, although it needs a strength of consciousness ; what we want is intensiveness, the art of distillation of our thought, which only comes from the true pride and real economy of force. Universalism is often a weakness itself. We do not need, in our Japanese literature, any long epic and song, because they are touched more or less by pretention. Our song is a potted tree of a thousand years' growth ; our song is a Japanese

tea-house—four mats and a half in all—where we burn the rarest incense which rises to the sky; our song is an opal with six colours that shine within.

MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE FLOWERS

My own attitude towards the flowers is the attitude of the so-called flower-master, or, to speak more exactly, that of the tea-master, because the former is now troubled by the theories which originally came to exist as a proof of adoration as if a dew from the burst of dawn. And the latter is the art of accident, though it may sound rather arbitrary, born from the proper setting. When I call the flower-arrangement of the tea-master the natural, I mean to emphasise the point of formalism in those of the flower-master for which the word "decorative" is merely an excuse. As you and I know well, the flowers are sufficiently decorative in nature without adding any emphasis; I think that "decorative" is one of those two or three words wrongly used in the West when applied to our Japanese art; and it is my own opinion that the true decorativeness will never be gained in any art of East or West through the point of emphasis. The real decorativeness of, for instance, Korin or Hoitsu lies, at least to our

Japanese mind, in the place where he is least decorative or, let me say, most natural; the word natural for the Japanese art is verily old and new. Now to turn to my attitude in looking at the flowers. I aim it to be natural, because my mind ever so hates to modify the beauty of the flowers; I dare say it is a new art (if I can call it so), not only to the West, but also to the East, which I gained perhaps through my perfect forgetting of the old Japanese flower art. When I cannot see the way how to explain myself, I always say: "I see the real nature in flowers." If you say I admire the selection of the flowers, you are wrong, because I never select them as it might appear to you; my chief value as a flower adorer, or mystery, if I have any, is how, and more important, where, to leave the flowers to sing their own quiet songs in a little vase, bronze or China, upon the *tokonoma*.

My mind astrays to the well-known story of Rikiu, the tea-master, of the sixteenth century, regarding the morning-glory, which Taiko, the great prince, entreated him to show him; it goes without saying that the morning-glory was

yet the rarest plant at that time. It is said that Rikiu had put all the flowers, of course morning-glories, away from the garden for the fine pebbles and white sand on the appointed day, where Taiko, as you can imagine, walked most sulkily towards the tea-room, where the great tea-master prepared the morning tea for his lord. The lord at once questioned himself where the morning-glory Rikiu promised was planted; but lo! when he entered the room, just one single morning-glory most winsome and delicate like a forgotten moonbeam, welcomed him from the *tokonoma*. Indeed, it was a great sacrifice for Rikiu to cut off all the other morning-glories; but it was the heroic way to give the one flower its full distinction. I think that the other flowers did not die in vain. So it is with my attitude towards the flowers when I look at them; I do not see the mass of them, and what I see in them, whether they be a willow or a branch of plums or the petals of lotus or the crawl of morning-glory, is just a touch or hint of their beauty, and I object to seeing the rest of them. To call my own way suggestive often leads people to misunderstanding;

if I have any artistic significance or merit in my attitude, it is my understanding of how to leave the space in the picture, nay, the *tokonoma* where the vase for the flowers stands, or to speak more poetically, how to cover up the space of that *tokonoma* with the most graceful nothing; therefore my *tokonoma* has no stupid vacancy. You might call it a Japanese art if you will; but I believe that the true art has no East or West as it is always born from nowhere.

FAITH

THE followers of Buddhism in the imperishable raiment of silence sit before the inextinguishable lamp of Faith, by whose light (indeed, the light older than life and the world) they seek the road of emancipation. The house east of the forests and west of the hills is dark without, and luminous within with the symbols of all beauty of ghosts and heavens. It is the most wonderful place where the imagination, at least the religious imagination, has for a thousand years never been changed; I like here, because it is the only place where criticism vainly attempts to enter for arguing and denying. The silence is whole and perfect, and makes your wizard life powerless; your true friendship with the ghosts sad and beautiful will soon be established. You have to abandon yourself to imagination only to create the absolute beauty and grandeur that make this our human world look so trifling, hardly worth troubling with; it is the magical house of Faith where the real echo of the oldest song still vibrates with the newest wonder, and even a

simple little thought, once under the touch of imagination, grows more splendrous than art, more beautiful than life. It is never a question of the size of your song and thought, but the question of Faith. We shall be at once brought back, if we are once admitted into that wonderful house, to the age of emotion and true love, where we speak only one language that is that of adoration. As it is the world of imagination, the life poetical and important will be in our sure reach; let us be thankful that the reality of the external world has ceased to be a standard, and we will happily be our own god, and Buddha. We will be a revelation, therefore a great art itself, of hope and passion, which will never fail.

THE MOODS

We are revellers at the banquet of the moods under the moon or forest; ask us not whether we are right or wrong, happy or sad, sane or mad. I only know that my life grows with the growing moods, and my literature with the growing life; that's quite enough. Let us sing, dance, and sing again; we may, in course of time, fight or theorise or assert or deny, as if a sad creature, only to make afterward our song and dance doubly fresh and free. Thought is great, doubtless; but the moods are greater. Thought, when it comes into existence with no touch of the moods, can be, at its best, a still-born child; it may look quite perfect, but, alas! it is dead. It was the life of the moods that created, in olden days, the gods and goddesses, and peopled the forest and stream; and it is the life of our modern moods as artists to make a forest or stream turn to a mass of green and light on the canvas. The moods are everything; for the sake of the high soar of my moods, I ask the women, wine, music, flowers, and birds to make their

own sacrifices. It is from the moods that the clouds fly, and the rains fall. We need not attempt to restrain our moods, but should let them take their own natural course; when they are bad and worthless, they are bound to die, without waiting for your force to be used. And there is always hope and passion when they grow and live; the things that grow and live are ever divine.

LIFE

"Good Lord, what do I know of life?" I exclaimed. I cannot help often thinking that it is impossible for me to understand life's meaning; I am a perfect failure; is there not a hidden joy that I missed where a willow-tree swings? is not there a strange tear that I should shed where a cloud points? Oh! is not there a beatiful love that I could not even dare to dream, where a stream chatters and away hastens? (Pray, stream, stay with me a little longer and speak more clearly to my prosaic mind!) I may have been a mere spectator before the stage of life; at least I have been regarded as such, and late at night when people sleep, early in the morning when people do not rise, I bitterly cry that I could not become a real player. Had I not any art as a player? But I can say, I believe, I had some experience when I thought I was a real player myself, when I pressed a cup of life's wine, and, in truth, did not know properly what to do with my own body, which was tickled, happy or sad, by an unfamiliar touch

of love, and I walked alone by a lonely road, more often sobbing, sometimes singing; alas, those hours did not last long. And I always found myself suddenly cool and passionless, and my uncertainty of mind awoke; when the scene changed I was no more a player, but a critic. Was it my strength or weakness? I could not accept wisdom good-naturedly, as my sceptic eye saw much foolishness in it; when I faced laughter my first question was of tears, and I was really a sad mortal, prone to undervalue the worth of love. Oh! what a wretchedness, after all! My mind is full of questions. And this questioning is, I think, the newest thing; the best possible pride is to say that I am of a new race. Such is my fate—the saddest fate indeed.

Happy was the ancient age when the minds of people were not tortured and wounded by questions, did not attempt to understand what they could not understand; and they had a great genius to turn their ignorance to the wonder of awakening. They lived fully. It is true that even I know how to live fully by reason or argument; but I have no faith, and

without the touch of faith reason cannot become a living thing. Shall I go eastward, westward, southward, or northward to seek Faith? If I were sure I would get it, I should not mind to travel any thousand miles. But night may fall before I walk much, when my head, of course uncontent and tired, may drop upon the dead leaves of a roadside tree.

HAPPINESS

To-day happiness is too commonplace even to wish to gain in the ordinary sense; at least its meaning has been changed. In the olden time, it was looked on as the most decent thing to desire beside health; people thought they had even a right to claim it, and it seems to me they got it in nine cases out of ten, as they were not so very fastidious. There is no time like to-day, when happiness has lost its golden dais; if health still keeps as a thousand years ago, a world-wide adoration, it is because it is least troubled with spirituality, that interesting baffler; and it is too honest to be less true. It never tells a lie. (But do you hate its homeliness and tactlessness?) We know that our forefathers who had, as it seems to-day, their virtue in stupidity, attached to happiness a meaning of permanence and stability of Cathay, and imagined it far away; but after all it is a superstition, is it not? And that superstition has been broken for some time now; however, I do not mean that happiness has ceased to exist. On the contrary, it is very much alive,

indeed, but not in the old meaning; and in what way? It is true, I think, that happiness which we fancied to be something substantial is found to-day to be a more psychical phenomenon; the question is where we can find it. It is much nearer to truth to say that one who least expects it always gets it, and to seek after it persistently is not always the way to get it. You must learn how to get it without a thought of it. And first of all you must understand that happiness is a most arbitrary word; the word itself means almost nothing. It should have a wider meaning than it used to have, because it should be understood, as I wish, to be a living quality of psychical life rather than one particular human feeling. Let me explain it to you in some other way.

A man went to a holy priest of the Zen sect, and disturbed his deep meditation with his complaint. He said: "I am miserable, because I am poor. I am miserable, because I am in ill health. I am miserable, because I am old." The priest said: "If you are poor, you try to live in poverty, and you shall be happy. If you are in ill health, you try to live

in ill health, then you shall be happy. If you are old, you try to live in old age, then you shall be happy."

Now, living in it is not living with it. Assimilation is not the proper word; to say to lose yourself in a condition of evanesence might be a better expression. And to lose it is to gain it. The best swimmer never struggles against the wave; and you have to go to the darkness of night for the light of day. There is a secret to turn misery or unhappiness on the spot to happiness by the magic of your conception (Oh the attitude!); and simple it is. If you say it tells only a half truth, I will say to you that the half truth can become the whole truth upon the shortest notice.

BEAUTIES

It may not be that the beauties refuse to mix; but their silence, solitariness and independence are dignity, also virtue, through which they rise to the highest worth. And when they have to mix, they should heat first and then set themselves to motion in song; the wonder is that they mix perfectly well. It is plain enough that the beauties of human life do never mix well till they gain a fire of love; I mean to say there is almost no beauty till love creates it for human life; and how do the beauties of Nature mix? I observe the clouds, trees, stars, mountains, birds and streams which mix at once through the fire of rhythm, and complete a song of natural harmony; I say the fire of rhythm, but you can say it is electricity or personal magnetism if you like. It is perfectly wonderful to see that they know their own places; I mean they never trespass but respect the others, and in song and action do their best. (It is only the sad mortals who always misstep consciously or unconsciously; their misstepping is so clear.) But I think that

their individuality is not distinguished, on the contrary, it is slightly impaired in most cases, when they mix with others and sing their music. I can explain this better with a Japanese picture drawn on a silk scroll; suppose you have right before you a picture of the autumnal moon whose golden light is reflected on a stream below. I am sure that neither the moon nor the stream do show their own best as when you look upon them separately; but is there not an unmistakable love and beautiful kindship as a whole? The true harmony is only gained from the very sacrifice of a certain individuality; it is so in nature as in human life. Therefore I said that the Nature is at its height of worth when it commands silence, solitariness and independence; I mean when it is all by itself, alone and separately. I remember I was given by my teacher of art, when I began art lessons in my boyhood days, the pictures of an orchid, or bamboo, or pine tree, to copy; they were the pictures of single objects. I see no great wisdom in it; and it is the most difficult sort of subject for a picture when I come to think of it to-day. Oh, what

a difficulty to draw its silence, solitariness and independence indeed! And I thought in those days it was rather an easy thing to draw; it is true that there is nothing hard for a boy. Oh, I wish I could return again to my boyhood days. It is not bad to enjoy the true harmony or music of nature; but to appreciate its silence, solitariness and independence is the true test of human culture. I know that education is always mischievous in wrong-doing; it makes us astray from the path true and free.

TRUTH

TRUTH is often insignificant, like a feather on a pigeon's back and sometimes solemn, important, heavy, like a cloud-scorning mountain of the North (North whence cold winter of wisdom comes); but truth is truth, not less, not more, under any circumstances. It is like a moon under a veil of mist, when you see it rather obscure and less impressive; it always exists full and round; it has no ebb nor flow.

It became more a habit of human nature, I dare say, than necessity, to seek truth; in fact, we need so often no-truth to get fire and power and adjust ourselves, just as we go straight to hatred for love. I even think it was started from human weakness; but it has grown a strength in general consent because it protects you. Therefore it was regarded as the most worthy object of life and the world from time immemorial; and I find already in the very old age quite a number of people who left their own record of sad failure in truth-seeking. It is strange enough we mistook it for success; the writing is at best merely an apology. I

have ample proof, however, to believe that the ancient people got more truth than we, because they were more quiet, not talking so much about this truth as we do. And it is our saddest hearts of modern age to discuss all days and nights on it and rarely agree with the others; we have found it so difficult to seek it. There will be no more talking about it when we have it right before us; indeed, what necessity have we then to talk about it, when we see it clear like the big sun of summer day?

We see many a one hurrying the East to look after truth; another to the West for the same purpose. One stops in one place; the other journeys far and distant. It is a pity to laugh over their restlessness with good intention; but restlessness is always a tax that fools have to pay. I will say to them: "Be composed and cool, my friends, and learn that descending is only the way of ascension. Not to seek truth is the shortest cut to get it. And if you want it you can find it anywhere in the world, even in the dusts of a street. You may ask me, then, how and where to find it.

But to tell it to you does no good at all; it is you are the person that wants it, not I; and I am not you. You must find your own salvation. It is not necessary to drink all the water; just a drop of it tells you the taste and mystery of the whole ocean. Let the infinite song of the forests and hills wander through the four seasons; you will find that song in the shiver of a leaf, in the beckoning of a grass, that lies before you at your feet. And when you forget the question of truth is when you perfectly understand it; as the real mountaineer does not see the mountain, the true seeker of truth never sees truth, because he is truth itself."

UGLINESS

We have a frequent moment when we see more beauty in ugliness, which often penetrates our soul; the ugliness, in such a case, must show a sort of eagerness of hope, though vague and distant, of reshaping. Such a hope itself is a virtue, therefore beauty; through that virtue, the ugliness is already redeemed of half its ugliness; there is nothing more divine than confession. Knowing its sad side for anything is always beautiful; that, only that, makes the ugliness reveal a far better light than beauty itself; its triumph is more staying. We often see one passionately fallen in love with the ugliness, and wildly scorning the smile of beauty; we might think such a one rather amusing, but he is not. He feels an irresistible happiness in pity; that happiness is, indeed, its highest water-mark, because it is burst from charity, therefore justification. Strange enough, however, is the fact that the true ugliness (often the true beauty) is not such a weak thing to always call for one's sympathy; it never needs any kind of improper argument. To say that

one is interested in ugliness is ironical; the truth is that he sees clearly a beauty in it, that beauty that leads you to peace, certainty, and eternity. It is quite a modern note to say that it is perfectly a shame to remain ugly, and we do not see the reason why we cannot turn beautiful; but the ugliness is far nearer to truth. This is the life of confession; indeed, the real life only begins when you see your real self itself. And not the beauty but the ugliness knows better about its own worth. It is true that beauty is false, or more apt to be false; we see more ugliness in beauty than beauty in ugliness. It is not my new discovery, but it is the fact old like life and the world. And it seems to me that we are slowly but steadily approaching the day when justice shall be done for anything. It is not too much to say that our life finds a solid support or life's nourishment in the beauty that is distilled through ugliness; ugliness is not ugliness after all.

NETSUKES

"The gesticulation of Nature and Life emphatically drawn on the little pieces of ivory."

WOMAN in Japan used to marry because marriage was thought most proper, even natural; but now she marries because it is very expensive. And the man marries from the sense of economy, not only physical but also spiritual; that is the point where he makes the first misstep in life.

Woman, at least in Japan, is always decorative in the common use of the word; in that she, as a piece of art, rarely rises into a pure high art, lies her merit. To say she is materialistic does her hardly justice; I see a case when she is spiritual, but it is more or less from the motive that she wishes to conceal her unhappiness and failure.

It is only sin, let me say, that never grows old; its homogeniety is quite peculiar. Indeed its hatred of respectability is most modern. When virtue changes, evolves, that is sure proof that it is never so strong as the sin itself.

There is a little thing which I picked up just because I was only afraid somebody else might pick it up; again there is another thing which I threw away just because I liked to hear it whispered how foolish I was. The both cases I experienced in the matter of women and love.

My romance died away when I ceased to deceive myself or play a trick on myself; I cannot see myself to-day as if another person. I feel envy in over-hearing some young man who exclaims: "Why, she is most sacred!" I confess that when I spoke such words fourteen or fifteen years ago even for my fancy's sake, I felt at least at the moment that I was speaking the nearest possible truth of the words myself.

Nearly all things can be bought, even cheaply. Really we are struggling how to buy them dear. That is one of the charms of us human beings.

It is a dying art in Japan how to compliment, especially to the fair sex; the Western

countries are, in truth, far better off than we in it. The fact that our Japanese women are not so simple and optimistic as supposed to be, has had a great deal to do in bringing about its sudden unexpected decline.

It is a custom to change your own name at first, when you become an actor or *geisha* or even wrestler, because art in Japan begins with masquerading; you will get art when you lose your own self. But suppose, when you want to return to your original self again, you have to part with all the art you got by the sacrifice of your own self! Art and Life are quite different things in Japan.

I put nearly everything good and true in my poetry; when my poetry is done, I hasten to the stupidity and plainness of Life. I am indeed amused to be told then: "How tired you look from having too much poetry! What a prosaic life you are now having!"

Failure is more true, more real, more sane, than success; to get the real failure is a great

triumph itself. I am a worshipper of failure; by the true power of failure I wish to reach the success.

People say that they get experiences from life; but that is hardly truth. When your dream turns to experiences by strange magic, it is there where your life begins. Experiences are not the fact, but imagination.

We are often optimistic because we are, in our heart of hearts, dreadfully pessimistic.

When a man marries again, that is from the reason, more than any other reason, that he likes to emphasise his life's failure, that is to mean, he wishes to keep up the atmosphere he created at the cost of failure. To say men risk their luck is wrong; there are only few men who understand what luck means.

Japan is not so prosaic as the Western countries where one's defects or originality are too exaggerated. The real Japanese originality is in our love of the commonplace.

Japan is the only one unique country where is such a difference yet between the married men and the bachelors.

It is only in Japan where the ages of young women are told in broad daylight.

Japanese are always happy, at least seem to be happy, because they rarely understand what love means.

One of the Japanese charms is in the fact that nothing, in Japan, from the matter of clothes to the matter of food, is ever enough.

Japanese women are turning nowadays from soft delicate pottery to cold hard porcelain. Although even in the former case they had to go through some fire, it is in the latter that a big fire is required and the painting on the surface will never appear so artistic as in the former case. The day for their indefinite charm of femininity or weakness as in pottery is already past.

Japanese women are simply glad to appear overdressed for the occasion as they never dress enough in their daily life.

There is no other way to cure the soul's illness except by the senses ; again there is no other way to cure the senses except by the power of spirit. But what shall happen when you attempt to cure the spirit with the spirit, the senses with the senses ; there will be only ruin for the result.

Indeed the Japanese monotony is unbearable. But wisdom will soon teach us it would be only the just proper way to escape from monotony that we bind or assimilate ourselves with it.

Ugliness is still supposed in Japan to be the virtue, the greatest virtue in the world.

It is poor Japanese art when it begins with climax and ends with exclamation as in some work of Hokusai or many later *Ukiyoye* artists. But when the art is high and noble

as in that of Sesshu and Sotatsu and a few others, the artists never speak in pictures except by the words of silence.

There are many people who think that modern personality is more or less a creation of audacity; I have a reason or two to think it a burden. Permit me to say that to have no personality at all in the present age is really to have a great personality.

Truth is that we Japanese lack in curiosity; therefore we are not inventive, creative, but merely imitative.

Present Japan is a sad mixture of bad action and good intention as if we say bad painting and good purpose for art. We are fooling ourselves when we say that we are having the best age of long history to-day.

Trouble is that we have Japan, true to say, but no Japanese, in the sense that there are Russians but not Russia. Indeed we lost our own individuality in thinking much of the nation.

There is in our Japanese life no period called youth; we arrive at manhood at once from boyhood; and those boyhood days are frightfully short.

Don't spoil your poetry by questioning, denying or renunciation. Only you have to adore it, praise it; that is the only way such an unreasonable thing as poetry will develope. The question of poetry is a question of nerve in which thought and passion have their sweet dreams.

I am like a cobweb hung upon the tree, a prey to every wind and sunlight. Who will ever say that we are safe and strong?

How sad Japan began her life with moralising. No, we shall not thank Confucius. If we had begun it with dance or song, our temperament might have been more natural. Nearly all the nations, it seems to me, began, just like us human beings, their own lives wrongly in spite of themselves.

What I am terrified about with success is

the way she comes. I hate anything accidental. It is, I think, a great test of my strength that I greatly fear to meet her on my road of life.

If there is anything admirable in Japan, that is no other but the Japanese woman's *kimono* quite formless, even fantastic. And it is the woman's love or personality when she makes it turn to a shape. How I used to hate to see the Western women apologetic under the tailor-made dress.

The vulgarisation of General Nogi has been going on for some time now almost recklessly; I see that a new book on him is sent out from the printer every day. (It is not far from truth to say that quite many books on Nogi go, not to the people, but straight to the waste-basket.) In old Japan, when a really great personality passed away, we built a temple or shrine upon his grave and, saying nothing, let our silent prayer tell our hearts. It was from the American journalism if we have made, as in fact, a third-rate gossip and tittle-tattle of a

shallow age out of our country; is it too much to say that it is America also who encourages our spiritual corruption? Gen. Nogi's personality is too sacred, therefore unfortunate as a choice of a subject for popular treatment; his final act made a class apart; its greatness is in its rainbow-sudden prophecy, not in the performance itself. Surely Reason would pass him by, but Poetry will take note of him. I deem him great, because he alone in the modern history of Japan made Life obey his will and Death's gold-armoured dignity shine in old splendour.

I always notice that when the Japanese expand and even impose ideas on others, it is the time when they have none of them; and they keep quiet and content like the fully-ripe chestnut snug in its burr when they have ideas. It is a half-filled wagon that makes a noise; the fully flowing sky has only the words of silence.

Pray see how the tea loses its real taste when against the sunlight, and again see how

the Chinese ink turns to ashen gray under the same condition. That is because they have denied the protection of Solitude and betrayed it. Oh, the great blessing of Solitude be upon me; let me rise and fall, live and die with it. I am a singer of silence, the ever-blossoming beauty of Solitude.

I think it is the most true way (let me say the most heroic way) to go through the pain of ugliness when you want to see and feel the real beauty. To see the world as it is and love it is common enough. Let me see the world first as it is not and hate it with the possible great hatred. And when I grow to see the world afterward as it is and feel to love it, it is the time when I am turning natural and true. To fall means to rise, or falling is just the beginning of rising.

I often thought before that the great enemy was doubt, but now I should like to say that to truly doubt is to truly believe. (So the enemy was my real friend.) And I should say that doubt is more human and far more living

than belief. Indeed, pain is more real and true than joy. Let me say, though paradoxical, Believe in Doubt, and doubt in Belief.

Is there anything new under the sun? Certainly there is. For instance, see how a bird flies. And how flowers smile.

FROM A JAPANESE INK SLAB

I THINK that the moon, among the natural phenomena, appears as if perfectly hating even an accidental shaking of hands or all personal contacts, oh what an aloofness in her shrinking from the worldly vulgarity. (The flowers, even the saintly lotus included, on the other hand, look always as if liking human friendship.) And what a feminine sensitiveness and adroitness in evading the others; see how amiably she slips from the trees' salutation. The mountains and hills have no power to keep her with them; the clouds are always baffled by her beautiful elusiveness. I am often mystified in taking my evening walk, by her hide-and-seek play; she frightens me from my back when I thought she should be right before me. And when I sought her amid the leaves, she was found smiling between the ripples of water at my feet! Oh I wish to have her gift for the avoidance of things that I do not want to do; what a personality in her having her own way.

Although Hokusai was a great artist (though he may not have been so great an artist as the pedestrian critics, mostly Europeans, think he is) he was at last a victim of the vulgar subject of Fuji Mountain; even his famous (famous in the West) Fuji in Lightning is a failure, because the picture has hardly anything except audacity in colour. When I turn over the pages of "One Hundred Views of Fuji," I always ask myself how much of the real mountain would be left if you took our Hokusai himself; when he entered into true Nature he was indeed great; when he left Nature for art, he was often mere artisan Hokusai. In one word, he was vulgar; and not only in his art, also in his act and manner he cultivated his vulgarity. Worse still, he is much prized in the West for his vulgarism. I should like to know who among Japanese artists ever succeeded with Fuji Mountain; I am glad that Hiroshige, unlike Hokusai, did not much draw that mountain. I hear one old artist, although I forget his name, who never painted Fuji in his life; what a distinction for that artist.

Not only Boston Beans, also the Boston literature, seems developing lately in Japan; the difference is that our Japanese cheap edition of Boston literature has no Emerson.

Why is there only one way to say Yes and No, while there might be in the West three hundred and sixty five ways of cooking eggs? We have here a hundred ways for bow-making; but there is only one way to sit.

I passed one day by a certain country road covered with foliage and grasses where Jizo, the stone deity who, it is said, paternally protects the dead children in Hades, stood sad and lonely. When I passed by a second time, I observed that one arm of that divinity was gone; at the third time, that was one month ago, I discovered that he was most pitifully headless. And when I passed by yesterday, he was seen no more; by asking one little boy playing by the roadside where he, that armless headless god, had gone, I discovered his saddest fate that the father of the boy had moved away the god to use him as a stone

weight for pickles. Oh what a lot of the beloved deity!

I once read in an old Chinese book that there was in ancient time a poet who prophesied war when he heard a voice of the cuckoo at a certain bridge at midnight. Who, I like to know, can foretell the future of Western art by the voice of an English thrush?

I overheard the other day some young man exclaim: "Friend, you reason too much!" That remark made me think for a while, and then I exclaimed to myself:" "Why! Have Japanese come already to reason too much?" Only forty years ago we were said to be barbarous; and now we are too uncomfortable under the burden of knowledge. Growing, whether wiser or foolish, is certainly degeneration: if we could stay too barbarous as in old time! We have lost a personality after all.

It is not a question how to take you; the most important question is how to arrive at the

goal. Our Japanese saying has it that the ship will go up the hill where there are too many sailors. We have too much talk in present Japan, have we not? Art has fallen, and poetry has fallen; and then other hundred worthy things have fallen; what we added to our original property was only a high hat marked a certain Chrysty and a frock coat. Oh what a farce!

From a Japanese Ink Slab

How many people really know that it has already dawned when the crows cry?

It is not difficult to make a frame; the real issue is the picture itself. The Japanese Government has been making a frame for the country for many years past; and now when the frame fairly done, she finds that there is the night already, too dark to draw the picture.

Where is a mountain deep enough to hide me? And where is a river big enough to swallow me? I say it, not because I am great, but because I am I. I beg you, however, not to mistake me as a so-called individualist.

I found only lately how sweet is to sleep. Is there any more sweet word than good-night?

I said to my friend that I must live at any cost till seventy years old, perhaps ninety years old or perhaps one hundred twenty years old. It was only yesterday I used to say I must not live to be more than twenty five, better still, not more than twenty years. How beautiful is Life! How the sun shines, how flowers bloom, how the river runs, how the birds fly, and above all, how grasses keep green!

I think that the best writing of the English language seems to mean to be read, while the best style of Chinese writing to be looked at. Oh how I wish to write my poetry to be smelled!

Nobody has told me how it was when I was born. But I have a clear, though faint enough, memory of when my little sister was born; it was the hot summer night when the mist-purple canopy of the sky was studded with

stars; that dreamy sight I remember I saw through the mosquito net which slightly swung like a lantern hung under the eaves when cool breezes flow. I do not know how I had fallen in sleep or dream; I was awakened at late midnight by a strange voice of a new-born baby who, I was told then by my elder brother, had come as another member of the family only a little while before. I cannot forget even to-day that my new sister's first cry, whether from pain or joy, which still echoes, I do think, on my heart, indeed continually during the last thirty years. It is not necessary to know how babies are born; there is one's existence where his voice is. That is enough. Oh that first fresh voice or cry of my little sister! Let me have my own real Voice to prove my own existence; oh my voice like that I uttered at the first moment when I left my mother's body.

From a Japanese Ink Slab

People do not deny or approve, strange enough, on seeing the flowers blooming and falling, on seeing the clouds coming and passing.

I used to fire my curiosity and desire of boyhood days with reading an old warrior's astonishing tales and legends; one of my favourite heroes was Yoshitsune who in his boy's time was taught mystery and fencing by a certain Tengu, a mountain elf of the Western hill from where a rainbow flashes and where the bright sun has his nightly bed. Oh how I longed for an acquaintance with that wonderful elf with a long nose and wings, when the setting sun burned the Western sky and hills. It happened one evening that I was severely scolded by my father; my rebellious little soul forced me at once to leave the house and turn my hurried step towards the Western hill, where the sunset fire was burning to make me imagine a strange castle of beauty and romance, and even hear a word or two of that kind elf there. My frightened dear mother pursued me and at last held my arm and took me back and again to be scolded by my stern father. But, oh, the Western hill where the Tengu might live and teach me Life's mystery; even to-day I feel to hear sometimes his tender call from the far-off rainbow and evening glow.

From a Japanese Ink Slab

And I often imagine what if my mother had not taken me back that evening, well, of almost thirty years ago; I might have found the elf then by the singular virtue and desire which are given only to a boy.

The heart of Wisdom is a sorrow and pain. It is a mistake if you think it to be a scalp-capped old scholar just stepped out from the library or classroom. Wisdom is a reformed criminal after all penalties paid; it is a wrong or confession turned to a saint.

It is not true to say that we have become impatient because we are wiser than our forefathers. But I know I believe that the realisation of Life' endless change and the possibility of a never-ending rebirth, even in the Buddhistic sense, makes me a wind (what an impatience of the wind's soul) crying in the wilderness.

The ancient Japanese always held the same attitude towards the world and life, whether with the frost-cold sword at the moment of *harakiri*, or with the tea-bowl in the *chano-*

yu rites ; their manner was never abrupt. And how they hated dispute and talk ! When they had to dispute, they let their swords settle the point ; and for talk, they used the language of silence. They were quiet and discreet towards Life's object ; they moved around it as if an artist, and again like an excellent artist, they never separated it from its surroundings. Where they were faithful to tradition they well expressed their own eccentricity ; and where they were eccentric they were most conventional. How the times made us change ! We trust too much in words ; how we assert and deny when a question comes forth ! And like an amateur, we walk upon to Life's stage most ungracefully, often forget our lines ; oh, what poor acting !

You must not come to see me till I tell you you may come ; I must be sure of the hour and day when the right light or proper shadow will be provided. Do you laugh at me over my having too great anxiety in my presentation as if a piece of art rare and old ? But what else am I, do you suppose ? When the first

night bell rings out, I will loosen and let fall all my reserves; it is the time when my head will turn towards my interlocutor. I will burn the incense which should rise as the silken folds of the world-wearied courtesy; under them the ego in myself intent but aloof, will put a proper presentation or emphasis on my life's page. Come, my friend, at such an hour, as my own respect for myself will then be the very respect for my art and song, I will show you my best; if you do not know how to come, my friend, I will tell you that you should ride on the cool breeze, or step on the shadow of the moon.

From a Japanese Ink Slab

Someone exclaimed to me the other day: "You are so awfully Japanese and so awfully English!" That was good indeed. When I am so awfully Japanese, I might be a slave to my emotion; but without my being so awfully English, my record of artistic development would not become visible. I confess, however, that I have a moment sometimes when I feel a secret regret at my being so awfully English; is it not the reason why I, seeing greatness right before myself, cannot get it?

If I can be called poet, that would be through the virtue that I carry it into my daily life; when I am most poetical, I know I believe that poetry will least betray itself. When I am most conventional, I feel I am most eccentric, therefore finer and far truer.

To express my vehemence I always use the language of silence, that is the best, strongest when crushing rivalry; in silence, when I am best and strong, I can be renaissance itself, and will create a peculiar tone and shade, let me dare say, the beauty of *nuance.*

If I look modern, it is because I am human. If I am inarticulate in song, that is because my heart is too full.

While I admire your brains, let me say that you are a little crude and flat; isn't there any way for you to forget your reaching the same old conclusions? Although I may appear to you alien, exotic, subtle, mysterious, often baffling, I do not mean to become different from you; and I always deny when people say that

my being here is rather a sacrifice and incongruity. My thought is only to become like yourself; if there is anything between you and me, it might be that I hope to grow plainer. Do you call that eccentricity?

I am in truth a spiritual exile, not because I have no friend, but because I lost somewhere a tradition and environment to which I think I should belong. And I hear the voice calling from a hidden world where more than one moon ever shine; alas, I do not know how to come there.

The other day my friend told me about his friend who ceased to be a poet when he grew fat. Oh where is a really great fat poet? And again where is a really great fat artist? Here turning over the pages of the catalogue of the Academy Exhibition, I can tell you the physiques of the artists from their pictures; many of them are quite fat, are they not?

If I fail to make me understood by the present Japanese, that might be from the fact

that they are less Japanese, or I am, in truth, more Japanese. How remote they are, being "un-Japanese," from me as I hope to put myself side by side with the old centuries (though I am not sure what century) who better controlled principle and flame for the unity in complexity; I always think it is perfect nonsense to say that the older time was simplicity. The older age well understood how to collect the passion and force, to use another word, to put colour into the time's mind. When I say that the present Japanese are un-Japanese, I like to dwell on their hatred of freedom while professing love for it; in their anxiety of knowledge I see their cowardice.

The occasion when people find me a little too difficult always falls on when I myself feel a little too shy. It is strange that they think me delightful when I feel absolutely hating myself.

How many people understand that pencils were to write their mind. There are people who think that the temples at Nikko were built in one day.