

## THE JAPANESE

JAPAN is a country of which the outer barbarian world as yet knows little. By slow degrees, however, the great wave of progress is making inroads even in that jealously guarded group of islands; but as yet it is but in three places, not in themselves of much importance, that the country is open to foreign commerce. The capital is only accessible to diplomatic agents, and the excursions which have been made into the interior have been of an imperfect kind.

Yeddo, with the great volcanic cone of Fusi-yama prominent in all the views of the city; Yokohama, Kanagawa, Kagosima, the Central Sea,—these names bring before us almost all that we really know about Japan. There are maps of the empire to be found, which show the divisions and towns of the great island of Nippon, and also of the smaller islands of the group; but we know little of them, except their names and their relative position. The day is yet to come when the physical geography of this fine group of islands will be laid bare to the researches of Western men of science. The latitude of the islands, together with the influence of that warm ocean current which may be called the Pacific Gulf Stream, ensures for them a mild climate; and rice, cotton, and silk are among the varied productions of this favoured country. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that earthquakes are not unusual, that the volcanic fires are not yet extinct in Japan, and that the shores are sometimes visited by the fierce typhoons which desolate the neighbouring seas.

The people themselves, however, their religion and government, their houses, their manners and customs, have been subject to observation in the different towns open to foreigners; and several accounts have been laid before the public. Of these, none is more interesting than the narrative of his life in Japan which has been given to the world by M. Aimé Humbert,\* the Swiss minister in Japan, who arrived there in the year 1863, and who has prepared a narrative of his sojourn in Yokohama and Yeddo, and his excursions in the neighbourhood of these places, which is extremely lively and interesting. M. Humbert's observations are chiefly upon the people; and his remarks, and the number of illustrations with which the descriptions in his two magnificent volumes are enriched, bring before us the Japanese, at least of the cities, with very great vividness. They live and move before our eyes: we see them in their temples, in their court dresses, in their everyday life, in their amusements, in the pursuit of their trades and professions, in the exercise of justice, in the celebration of their annual fêtes.

The Japanese, M. Humbert thinks, are of diverse origin. Some possibly came from China, some were Mongols from the neighbouring Corea; but doubtless many derive their descent from ancestors whose frail boats were drifted from the Malaysian Archipelago far to the south. The Japanese are not a tall race; the head and chest are generally large, the legs short, the hands small and often beautiful, the hair long, smooth, and black, the nose well-defined, the eyes more prominent than those of Europeans, the dominant colour of the skin an olive brown, though the colour varies from an almost copper brown to a dull white. The women are lighter in colour than the men, and in the higher classes they are often perfectly white.

In their domestic relations the Japanese are kindly, especially to their children, for whom they have intense affection, and for whose pleasure they will make any sacrifice. The Japanese takes but one wife; but he has it in his power to take secondary spouses, and not unfrequently avails himself of the privilege. The Japanese women are in a state of extreme subjection to their lords.

The religion of the vast mass of the people is Buddhism,

with a vast array of bonzes or priests, and great temples, colossal idols, and a complicated system of worship. One of the grandest of the idols is well described by M. Humbert; it is the image of Diaboudhs, the great Buddha:—"The road to the temple is distant from all habitations; it winds between tall hedges, then a straight road mounts up between foliage and flowers, then a sudden turn follows, and all at once, at the end of an avenue, is seen a gigantic divinity of copper, seated in a squatting attitude, with the hands joined and in the attitude of contemplative ecstasy." The acceptance of the Buddhist doctrine of the ultimate passing of man into annihilation produces, it is said, in the Japanese, that wonderful disregard of human life which is one of their most remarkable characteristics. But besides the Buddhist theology, there is also a worship of the Kamis, or ancestral divinities, which prevails in Japan. The Kamis are not always the ancestors of separate families; the greatest of them, indeed, are the fabled ancestors of the whole Japanese race. But the belief in these ancestral deities leads to a vast amount of reverence being paid to the memory of the dead, and to annual visits to the tombs of the departed. These visits to the hills of the dead which surround the towns



HOTEI

are distinguished by much illumination of torches, and terminate with a setting afloat of little boats, each with lights, which drift down the river at night, and of which the lights are one by one extinguished. There is, besides, a belief in a number of tutelary deities, some of whom are half-mystic heroes—gods who preside over the events of life, whose fêtes are occasions of much national rejoicing, and whose influence contributes to counteract the sombre effects which an exclusively Buddhist belief would produce. Of one of these, Hotei, the accompanying illustration gives a representation, the fac-simile of a Japanese drawing. Hotei is the personification of contentment in the midst of poverty. He is the sage who possesses no worldly goods—the Diogenes of the great Nippon. His sole belongings are a scrap of coarse hempen cloth, a wallet, and a fan. When his wallet is empty he only laughs at it, and lends it to the children in the street, who use it for their games. For his part, he converts it by turns into a mattress, a pillow, a mosquito-net: he seats himself on it as on an inflated skin to cross a current of water. Hotei leads a somewhat vagabond life. He is sometimes met mounted on the buffalo belonging to a cultivator

\* Le Japon illustré, par Aimé Humbert, ancien plénipotentiaire de la Confédération suisse. 2 vols. 4to. L. Hachette et Cie, Paris.

of the rice-fields. All the country-folk are his friends. He sleeps under the trees; and the children awake him. Then he takes them in his arms, tells them stories of the sky, the moon, the stars, all the magnificence of nature, treasures which no one knows better than himself how to enjoy.

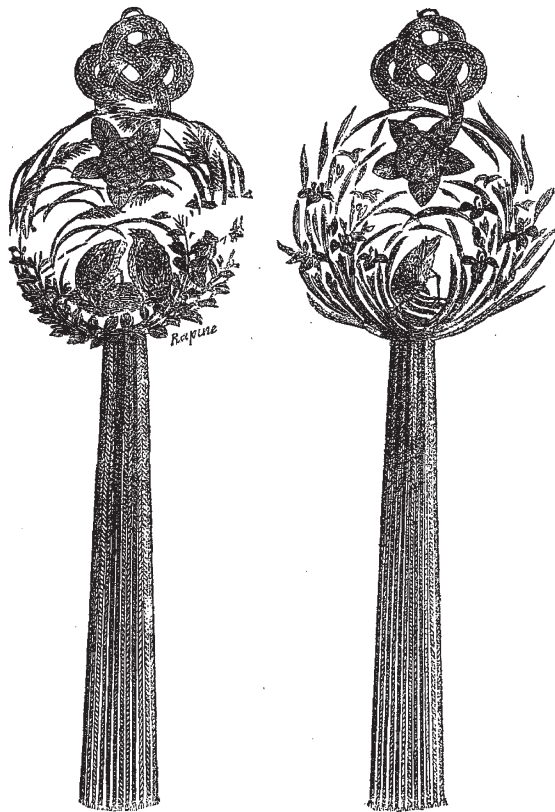
The government of Japan is a species of feudal confederation, with a theocratic head. The Mikado, the son of the gods, and hereditary emperor, is the representative of the sacred power; but the civil and military administration rested until very recently in the hands of his lieutenant-general, the Tycoon, whose headquarters were in Yeddo. The great princes, or Daimios, are in many instances almost independent, and they are only held in subjection by being obliged to have a double residence; one on their own estates, and the other in Yeddo, where their families are kept as hostages for their good behaviour. The Yaconins, or military following of the Daimios, constitute a turbulent class of the population, bound solely to their feudal lords, and ready for any fray that may happen. It is among the Japanese of the upper classes that the act of *hara-kiri* is practised. This is a suicide, nominally accomplished by plunging a knife into the bowels, but really, in cases of punishment, by the assistance of the person who stands prepared to strike off the head of the victim at the moment when the knife is placed for the fatal blow.

The Japanese are a cultivated people, with letters and literature partly of Chinese origin, but modified in order to adapt them to Japanese use. They have also a distinct national history; and their literature, though not rich in philosophical disquisitions, abounds in legends, in fables, in satirical descriptions. The Japanese have also highly developed artistic tastes; and painting, drawing, and sculpture are followed as distinct professions. The Japanese drawing does not always satisfy European exigencies with regard to perspective; but the colouring is brilliant, and in Japanese sketches, whether of plants or animals, people or landscape, there is a breadth, life, and truth, which many European artists of much higher pretensions might envy. In fact, the best notions that we can obtain of Japanese life and its surroundings are to be derived from the numerous sketches by Japanese artists which exist, and which represent the people pursuing their daily occupations. M. Humbert has profusely illustrated his work with pictures—partly facsimiles of native work, partly drawn after sketches made by Japanese artists. The Japanese have what the Chinese seem to be deficient in, a strong sense of humour; and this they exhibit in a very striking manner in their sketches, in which human beings are represented by typical animals. Thus, sketches may be seen in which an old bonze is represented as a wolf, a group of Buddhist nuns as weasels, and a company of rats acting as rice-merchants.

The artistic tastes of the people and their love of Nature are both illustrated by their passion for flowers, and by the skill with which they are cultivated. No feast is considered perfect without flowers, and flower-shows meet with as much approbation in Japan as in England. The Japanese gardeners exhibit great skill in the arts of raising new varieties of flowers, of grafting plants, so that different flowers and leaves grow in what appear to be branches of the same plant; and they are, above all, learned in the manufacture of dwarfed plants, which are in great request as house ornaments. The Japanese delight in gardens, and they lay out small pieces of ground with wonderful skill, contriving to "give ample space to narrow bounds" with much ingenuity. The vast *enceinte* of Yeddo encloses much garden ground, and the people make at least three definite excursions to the suburbs at different times of the year, to see with their own eyes how the seasons progress. These excursions are often made as picnics, in which merry family groups take part. The Japanese have also a great fondness for aquaria; every

house possesses one, and an aquarium, with small fish in it, is a very common object to be seen in houses.

The Japanese common people, both the *bourgeoisie* and the lower orders, take life with as much enjoyment as possible. The *fêtes* of various gods, who are patrons of one or other of the numerous industries exercised, afford occasion for long processions, with great displays of banners and symbols, for much merriment, and a not always dignified or moderate consumption of saki. Nor are the pilgrimages made to the sacred snow-covered Fusi-yama and to the various habitations of holy hermits altogether without alleviations. The events of domestic life—births, marriages, deaths, presentations of children in the temple, the coming-of-age of boys, when they have completed their fifteenth year, visits to the burial-places of ancestors—all afford occasion for friendly meetings, and for much ceremonial.



SILKEN ORNAMENTS

Theatrical entertainments, and the performances of wrestlers, acrobats, jugglers, and ballet dancers are among the public amusements to which the Japanese are passionately attached. The theatres at Yeddo to which foreigners have had access are chiefly those patronised by the *bourgeoisie*; but among the audience are to be found nobles who assume a dress intended to show that they pay their visit incognito. Wrestlers are under special imperial patronage, and are much favoured by the people. The contests consist chiefly of struggles as to which of two competitors shall by mere weight push the other out of a circle marked off by bags filled with straw. Japanese wrestling is utterly unlike what is understood in England by the same term; and the men engaged in it are generally in a fleshy condition which, among ourselves, would be considered utterly incompatible with a state of "training." The feats of performers who execute wonderful



tricks of balancing, and of jugglers who do the "butterfly trick," which has lately been so popular among ourselves, elicit great applause. So popular also are ballet performances, that even the priests, in some of the great temples, engage in sacred dances to add to the "legitimate" attractions of the places of worship. Fencing is a favourite amusement, and is taught to women.

The public baths where men and women conduct their ablutions in the sight of all the world, and the tea-houses; at which women wait on the guests, are two features of Japanese life which are very strange to European eyes.

The town of Yeddo has a very striking physiognomy, so to speak. To the south are the suburbs on the shores of the bay; in the centre the citadel and the dwellings of the nobility; to the south-east, the trading town; to the east, the quays and bridges of the great river, and on the left bank the industrial city of Hondjo; to the north lie the temples, the fields where fairs are held, the theatres and public places of amusement. The western quarters are occupied by the general city population; and the suburbs of the north and west are full of verdure and flowers.

Yeddo has been calculated to have 1,800,000 inhabitants, although as an important city it only dates from the beginning of the 17th century. It is the northern termination of the great military road, the Tokaido, which traverses the empire from Nagasaki to Yeddo, near to which are built towns, villages, and many houses of the nobility, and along which the Daimois pass when proceeding to their compulsory residence in Yeddo. The modes of travel in use are either horseback, or palanquins carried by men. These latter are of two kinds; the norimon, closed on all sides, and in use among the upper classes, and the cango, light in construction, open at the sides, and used by the common people. As the Daimois pass along with their two-sworded retinue, all passengers give way to them, those that are on horseback dismount, and all stand bending low till the great man has gone on his way. The refusal of foreigners to submit to this fashion has led to the murder of more than one.

Yeddo is a busy town. Cotton and silk manufactures of a delicate kind, the making of porcelain, dyeing, tanning, the working in metals, the carving of stone, wood, and ivory, the manufactures of paper and of leather are all carried on in the town. (An illustration of the delicate silk embroidery which is made by the Japanese is given in the accompanying woodcuts, which represent silken dress ornaments.) In the suburbs, especially of the northern part, the gardens of the florists, the rural tea-houses, and the rice-fields are found. Minor industries—those of the makers of chop-sticks, of toothpowder, of dolls, of makers of mats, basket-work, and boxes, down to that of the humble rag picker—are to be found exercised in the small shops, or in the streets of Yeddo. The streets are full of life. The trades are carried on by the artisans, the jugglers and acrobats exercise their skill, men, women, and children pass along, bent on amusement or pleasure; here an enormous artificial fish, or a flag displayed at a house, announces the birth of a child; there a wedding procession takes its way; a Daimio passes, and all bow to the ground; an alarm of fire from one of the many watchtowers of the city calls out the firemen; the watch goes on its rounds; beggars exercise their arts as a kind of sacred trade—in a word, all the complicated machinery of a busy town life is to be seen in active operation, in what was the great capital of the Tycoon.

A jealous exclusion of foreigners prevailed in Japan for more than two centuries and a half; the only favoured people being the Dutch, who were permitted to build a small factory at Decima, and to send thither annually two trading vessels. The arrival of foreigners and their trade were regarded by the Tycoon and the nobles with dislike, chiefly because of the possibility that the introduction of new ideas might upset the old order of things; and the residence of foreign Ministers in Yeddo was rendered so uncomfortable, and

even dangerous, that the legations settled in Yokohama as their permanent place of residence.

Recent events have effected a great change in the government of Japan. The Mikado, the theocratic emperor, has abolished the office of Tycoon. He has left his sacred city, and established himself, temporarily at least, in Yeddo, where the legations are in greater security than before. The export of tea and silk, already great, is increasing: and it is possible that Japan, so long isolated, may in time resume her relations with the outer world, and become, as her early records show her to have been, a busily trading, progressive nation.

It will be seen from the foregoing notice that M. Humbert's volumes contain an immense mass of valuable information as well as exquisite illustrations and lighter matter.

J. A. CHESSAR

#### FOOD OF OCEANIC ANIMALS

THE receipt of an interesting paper by Professor Dickie, entitled "Notes on range in depth of marine Algæ," lately published by the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, induces me to call the attention of physiologists to the fact, that plant-life appears to be absent in the ocean, with the exception of a comparatively narrow fringe (known as the littoral and laminarian zones), which girds the coasts, and of the "Sargasso" tract in the Gulf of Mexico.

During the recent exploration in H.M.S. *Porcupine* of part of the North Atlantic, I could not detect the slightest trace of any vegetable organism at a greater depth than fifteen fathoms. Animal organisms of all kinds and sizes, living and dead, were everywhere abundant, from the surface to the bottom; and it might at first be supposed that such constituted the only food of the oceanic animals which were observed, some of them being zoophagons, others sarcophagons, none phytophagons. But inasmuch as all animals are said to exhale carbonic acid gas, and on their death the same gas is given out by their decomposition, whence do oceanic animals get that supply of carbon which terrestrial and littoral or shallow-water animals derive, directly or indirectly, from plants? Can any class of marine animals assimilate the carbon contained in the sea, as plants assimilate the carbon contained in the air?

Not being a physiologist, I will not presume to offer an opinion; but the suggestions or questions which I have ventured to submit may perhaps be worth consideration. At all events the usual theory, that all animals ultimately depend for their nourishment on vegetable life, seems not to be applicable to the main ocean, and consequently not to one-half of the earth's surface.

J. GWYN JEFFREYS

#### GOLD DIGGERS IN THIBET

THE Thibetan gold-field of Thok-Jalung in lat. 32° 24' 26" and long. 81° 37' 38" was visited by the pundits employed by the G. T. Survey, in 1867 (August). The camp was pitched in a large desolate plain of a reddish brown appearance, the tents stand in pits seven or eight feet deep for protection against the cold wind, the elevation being 16,330 feet, yet the diggers prefer to work in the winter, when nearly 600 tents are to be found there; the soil when frozen does not "cave in." They have no wood, but use dried dung for fuel, and the water is so brackish as to be undrinkable until frozen and remelted. They live well, taking three meals a-day of boiled meat, barley cakes, and tea stewed with butter. They will not use the Himalayan tea, as too heating and only fit for poor folks.

The gold is obtained from an excavation a mile long, twenty-five feet deep, and ten to two hundred paces wide, through which a small stream runs; the implements used are a long-handled kind of spade, and an iron hoe.