

## II.

## A RIDE ON THE TŌKAIDŌ.

January 2d, 1871.—A frosty morning. Air keen, bracing, razor-like. Sky stainlessly clear. The Bay of Yedo glinting with unnumbered sunbeams. Blue sky, blue water, blue mountains, white Fuji.

The Yankee has invaded the Land of the Gods. He jostles the processions of the lords of the land. He runs a coach on the great highway, so sacred to daimiōs and two-sworded samurai. Here on the Bund stands the stage that will carry a man to the capital for two Mexican dollars. Of the regulation Yankee pattern, it is yet small, and, though seating three persons besides the driver, can crowd in five when comfort is not the object in view. A pair of native ponies on which oats are never wasted make the team. A *bettō* (running footman and hostler), whose business is to harness the animals, yell at the people on the road, and be sworn at, perches, like a meditative chicken, by one foot on the iron step. As for the driver, an Australian, who is recommended as "a very devil of a whip," he impresses me at once as being thoroughly qualified to find the bottom of a tumblerful of brandy without breathing.

He is not only an expert at driving and drinking, but such an adept in the theology of the bar-room is he, and so well versed in orthodox profanity, that the heathen *bettō* regards his master as a safe guide, and imitates him with conscientious accuracy. The driver converts the pagán better than he knows. Indeed, it is astonishing what progress his pupil has made in both theology and the English language. He has already at his tongue's end the names and attributes of the entire Trinity.

Crack goes the whip, and we rattle along the Bund, past the Club-house, around the English consulate, past the Perry treaty grounds, and down Benten dōri, through the native town. The shops are just opening, and the shop-boys are looping up the short curtains that hang before each front. The bath-houses begin business early. The door of one is shunted aside, spite of the lowness of the thermometer and

ment, and only his little shaven noddle protrudes behind his mother's neck. His own neck never gets wrenched off, and often neither head nor tiny toes are covered, though water is freezing. In the picture on the preceding page, the fat-checked baby is carried by a young, unmarried girl, as I can tell by the way her hair is dressed. It is probably an elder sister or hired servant. Her bare feet are on wooden clogs.

Here are adults and children running around barefoot. Nobody wears any hats. As for bonnets, a Japanese woman might study a life-time, and go crazy in trying to find out its use. Every one wears cotten clothes, and these of only one or two thicknesses. None of the front doors are shut. All the shops are open. We can see some of the people eating their breakfast—beefsteaks, hot coffee, and hot rolls for warmth? No: cold rice, pickled radishes, and vegetable messes of all unknown sorts. These we see. They make their rice hot by pouring tea almost boiling over it. A few can afford only hot water. Some eat millet instead of rice. Do they not understand dietetics or hygiene better? Or is it poverty? Strange people, these Japanese! Here are large round ovens full of sweet-potatoes being steamed or roasted. A group of urchins are waiting around one shop, grown men around another, for the luxury. Twenty cash, one-fifth of a cent, in iron or copper coin, is the price of a good one. Many of the children, just more than able to walk themselves, are saddled with babies. They look like two-headed children. The fathers of these youngsters are coolies or burden-bearers, who wear a cotten coat of a special pattern, and knot their kerchiefs over their foreheads. These heads of families receive wages of ten cents a day when work is steady. Here stands one with his shoulder-stick (*tembimbō*) with pendant baskets of plaited rope, like a scale-beam and pans. His shoulder is to be the fulcrum. On his daily string of copper cash he supports a family. The poor man's blessings and the rich man's grief



Coolie waiting for a Job.

are the same in every clime. In Japan the quiver of poverty is full, while the man of wealth mourns for an heir. The mother bears the bairns, but the children carry them. Each preceding child, as it grows older, must lug the succeeding baby on its back till able to stand. The rearing of a Japanese poor family is a perpetual game of leap-frog.

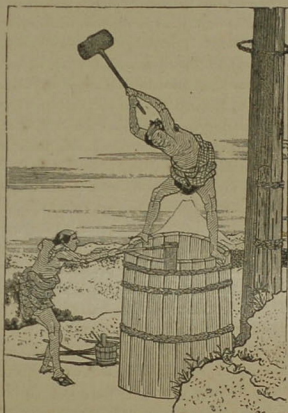
The houses are small, mostly one story, all of them of wood, except the fire-proof mud-walled store-houses of the merchant. Most are clean inside. The floors are raised a foot above the ground, covered with mats. The wood-work is clean, as if often scrubbed. Yet the Japanese have no word for soap, and have never until these late days used it. Nevertheless, they lead all Asiatics in cleanliness of persons and dwellings. Does not an ancient stanza of theirs declare that "when the houses of a people are kept clean, be certain that the government is respected and will endure?" Hot water is the detergent, and the normal Japanese gets under it at least once a day. For scrubbing the floor or clothes, alkali, obtained by leeching ashes, is put in the water.

The shop-keeper sits on his hams and heels, and hugs his *hibachi* (fire-bowl). What shivering memories I have of it! Every Japanese house has one or more. It is a box of brass, wood, or delf. In a bed of ashes are a handful of coals. Ordinarily it holds the ghost of a fire, and radiates heat for a distance of six inches. A thermo-multiplier might detect its influence further on a cold day. With this the Japanese warm their houses, toast their fingers for incredibly long spaces of time, and even have the hardihood to ask you to sit down by it and *warm* yourself! Nevertheless, when the coals are piled up regardless of expense, a genial warmth may be obtained. The shop-keepers seem to pay much more attention to their braziers than to their customers. What strikes one with the greatest surprise is the baby-house style and dimensions of every thing. The rice-bowls are tea-cups, the tea-cups are thimbles, the tea-pot is a joke. The family sit in a circle at meals. The daughter or house-maid presides at the rice-bucket, and paddles out cupfuls of rice.

We pass through Kanagawa, a flourishing town, and the real treaty port, from which Yokohama has usurped foreign fame and future history. We pass many shops, and learn in a half-hour the staple articles of sale, which we afterward find repeated with little variation in the shops all over the country. They are not groceries, or boots, or jewelry, nor lacquer, bronze, or silk. They are straw-sandals, paper umbrellas, rush hats, bamboo-work of all kinds, matting for coats, flint, steel and

tinder, sulphur splints for matches, oiled paper coats, and grass cloaks, paper for all purposes, wooden clogs for shoes: fish and radish knives, grass-hooks, hoes, scissors with two blades but only one handle, and axes, all of a strange pattern, compose the stock of cutlery. Vegetable and fish shops are plentiful, but there is neither butcher nor baker. Copper and brass articles are numerous in the braziers' shops.

In the cooper shops, the dazzling array of wood-work, so neat, fresh, clean, and fragrant, carries temptation into housekeepers' pockets. I know an American lady who never can pass one without buying some useful utensil. There are two coopers pounding lustily away at a great rain-tank, or saké-vat, or soy-tub. They are more intent on their bamboo hoops, beetles, and wedges than on their clothing, which they have half thrown off. One has his kerchief over his shoulder.



Coopers hooping a Vat. (By a pupil of Hokusai.)

In Japan the carpenter is the shoe-maker, for the foot-gear is of wood. The basket-maker weaves the head-dress. Hats and boots are not. The head-covering is called a "roof" or "shed." I remember how in America I read of gaudily advertised "Japanese boot-blacking," and "Japanese corn-files." I now see that the Japanese wear no boots or shoes, hence blacking is not in demand; and as such plagues as corns are next to unknown, there is no need of files for such a purpose. The total value of the stock in many of the shops appears to be about five dollars. Many look as if one "clean Mexican" would buy their stock, good-will, and fixtures. I thought, in my innocence, that I should find more splendid stores elsewhere. I kept on for a year or more thinking so, but was finally satisfied of the truth that, if the Japanese are wealthy, they do not show it in their shops. The

prosaic truth is that the people are very poor. Of course, being fresh from the splendor of the fine young fellows, the "princes" of the newspapers, in America, who were noted for their impressive wardrobe, dazzling jewelry, hotel-bills, and carriages, I could not believe the truth about Japan then. My glamourised eyes refused to see it. "I shall see the wealth, but not now," was my thought.

Tugging up the steep hill and past Kanagawa, we dash over the splendid road beneath an arch of pines, some grandly venerable, some augustly tall, some like a tottering empire, glorious in decay, but many more scraggy and crooked. We pass all kinds of dress and characters on the road. Now, our *bettō* yells out to a merchant, who ambles along with a pack on his back tied over his neck. Our driver prays his God to damn some poor old priest who was not as nimble as he might have been forty years ago. Anon, the exponent of Christian civilization informs a farm laborer, trudging along, hoe on shoulder, that he will "cut the d—d face off him" if he isn't spry. A gawky heathen, leading a pack-horse loaded with an unmentionable article, is made to know, by a cut of the whip over his neck, that he must move faster next time. The priest in his robes, brocade collar, and shaven head; the merchant, in his tight breeches; the laborer, with his bare legs; the samurai, with his two swords and loose trousers; the pilgrim, in his white dress, are all easily recognized.

As for the beggars, we can not understand their "*Chabu chabu komarimasū tempō danna san, dōzo* (Please, master, a penny; we are in great trouble for our *grub*); but we comprehend the object of their importunity. They are loathsome, dirty, ragged, sore. Now I wish I were a physician, to heal such vileness and suffering. Who would care to do an artist's or a poet's work when the noblest art of healing needs to be practiced? The children run after us. The old beggars live in straw kennels by the roadside. Some are naked, except dirty mats bound round them. The law of Japan does not recognize them as human: they are beasts. The man who kills them will be neither prosecuted nor punished. There lies one dead in the road. No! Can it be? Yes, there is a dead beggar, and he will lie unburied, perhaps for days, if the dogs don't save the work from the coroner. "And the beggar died!" Will he be carried by angels to Abraham's bosom?

The driver reins up, and the horses come to a halt. We have stopped before a tea-house of whose fame we have heard, and man and beast are refreshed. The driver takes brandy, the *bettō* tea, and the

horses water. The first drinks from a tumbler, the second from a cup; the four-footed drinkers must wait. Pretty girls come out to wish us good-morning. One, with a pair of eyes not to be forgotten, brings a tray of tiny cups full of green tea, and a plate of red sweetmeats, begging us to partake. I want neither, though a bit of paper-money is placed on the tray for beauty's sake. The maid is about seventeen, graceful in figure, and her neat dress is bound round with a wide girdle tied into a huge bow behind. Her neck is powdered. Her laugh displays a row of superb white teeth, and her jet-black hair is rolled in a maidenly style. The fairest sights in Japan are Japan's fair daughters.

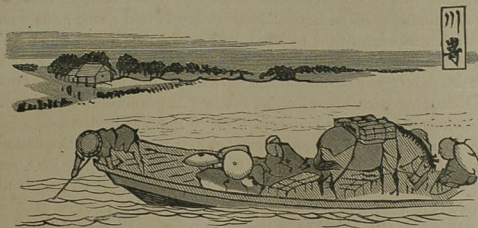
This tea-house has a history. Its proprietress is familiarly known among all foreigners who ride on the Tōkaidō, and sit on her mats inside, or her benches in front beneath the trees, as "Black-eyed Susan." Her eyes deserve their renown, and her face its fame. Her beauty is known throughout the land. Many a story is told about princes and noblemen who have tried to lure her to gem their harem. She refuses all offers, and remains the keeper of herself and her fortune. Near by Black-eyed Susan's stands a clump of trees. It was near this place that, in 1863, poor Richardson lost his life (see Appendix). He sleeps now in Yokohama cemetery. It saddens us to think of it.

Our solemn thoughts are dissipated in a moment, for the bettō is watering the horses. He gives them drink out of a dipper! A cupful of water at a time to a thirsty horse! The animal himself would surely laugh, if he were not a Japanese horse, and used to it.

"Sayonara!" (farewell) cry the pretty girls, as they bow profoundly and gracefully, and the stage rolls on. We pass through villages of thatched houses, on which, along the ridge, grow beds of the iris. Between them appear landscapes new to eyes accustomed to grass meadows and corn-fields and winter wheat of Pennsylvania. Far and wide are the fallow fields covered with shallow water, and studded with rice-stubble. All the flat land is one universal rice-ditch. The low hills are timbered with evergreen. The brighter tints of the feathery bamboo temper the intensity of the sombre glory. Bamboo thickets, pine groves, and rice-fields—these are the ever-present sights in Japan. A half-hour through such scenery, and the stage stops at Kawasaki (river-point) to change horses. We are to cross the Roku-go River in boats. The road bends at a right angle toward the water, and at each corner is a large tea-house, full of noisy, fat girls, anxious to display a vulgar familiarity with the stranger. Too close contact with hostlers, drivers, and the common sort of residents in Japan has

made these, doubtless once modest and polite females, a pack of impudent wantons.

I am not charmed by the too-willing charmers, and, declining the ever-proffered cup of tea, make my way down to the river, passing four toll-men, who squat on their knees at the receipt of custom, piling on upright skewers the square-holed oval and round coins which the travelers deposit. At the river's edge, a flat-bottomed boat, crowded with people of every class, with a horse or two on board, is coming hitherward, and one is just ready to push off. A few strokes of the pole, and we are over. The Japanese have used this river for centuries, and have never yet built a bridge.\* The company in the boat is sometimes rather mixed. It has not escaped Hokusai's pencil, who made an album of Tōkaidō sketches. He has jotted down at the side



Crossing the Rokngo River at Kawasaki. (Hokusai.)

of his sketch the two characters signifying Kawasaki (river-point), which all travelers to Tōkiō know full well. Strange to say, the same river in Japan often has many local names. A Japanese geography rarely thinks it necessary to describe a river from source to mouth. The people hereabouts call this river the Rokngō, and the foreigners, who are quite sure to get Japanese names upside down, have corrupted it into Logo, or, with apparent impiety, Logos.

The stage not being over yet, I go into a straw hut, in which a fire warms twenty-four feet shod with rice-straw sandals, and the smoke of which inflames twenty-four eyes belonging to half that number of such specimens of humanity as constitute the bulk of Japan's population, and whom foreigners called "coolies." Two arms, two legs, a

\* An iron bridge now (1877) spans the stream.

head, and trunk, when added together in an Asiatic country, do not produce the same sum that such factors would yield in America. With us a man is a man. In Asiatic countries he is a wheelbarrow, a beast of burden, a political cipher, a being who exists for the sake of his masters or the government. The men before me wear old, unlined cotton coats and straw sandals as their winter dress. In summer their wardrobe consists of straw sandals and a rag around their loins, in all about thirty-six linear inches of decency. Yet the tax-gatherer visits them, and even the priests glean in this stubble of humanity. Schools, law, thought, freedom, votes! These are unheard of, unimagined. Yet they were polite and kind. They offer the foreigner room by the fire, until the smoke drives him outside, where the loathsome beggars swarm and importune in the language of the houseless. The stage is ready, and, taking one good look at the bright new railway bridge by which hired English energy and loaned capital have spanned the river, I fold myself beneath the buffalo-robe, and the driver proceeds to tell me of the treat soon in store.

The ghastly entertainment was at hand. Just before Shinagawa, the suburb of great Tōkiō, by the side of the road, is a small patch of grassy soil only slightly raised above the rice-ditches. Here, on a pilory about six feet high, two human heads were exposed, propped, and made hideously upright by lumps of clay under each ear. The oozing blood had stained the timber, and hung in coagulated drops and icicles of gore beneath. A dissevered head absent from its body is horrible enough, but a head shaven in mid-scalp with a top-knot on it has a hitherto unimagined horror, especially Japanese.

How pleasant it would be to mention in this book nothing but the beautiful! How easy to let our glamoured eyes see naught but beauty and novelty! Why not paint Japan as a land of peerless natural beauty, of polite people, of good and brave men, of pretty maidens, and gentle women? Why bring in beggars, bloody heads, loathsome sores, scenes of murder, assassins' bravery, and humanity with all nobility stamped out by centuries of despotism? Why not? Simply because homely truth is better than gilded falsehood. Only because it is sin to conceal the truth when my countrymen, generous to believe too well, and led astray by rhetorical deceivers and truth-smotherers, have the falsest ideas of Japan, that only a pen like a probe can set right. No pen sooner than mine shall record reforms when made. I give the true picture of Japan in 1871.

So we pass these bloody symbols of Japan's bloody code of edicts,



misnamed laws, by which she terrifies her people into obedience, and drive on through the narrow road past fine, large houses, clean, shining, and pretty. What business is carried on in those edifices, splendid in Japanese eyes, charming to a foreigner, and appearing, beside the ordinary citizen's dwelling, as palaces beside cottages? Scores of them are ranged along the road. Shinagawa is the home of harlots, and here is the resort, not only of the ruffian, the rake, and the robber, but of the young men of the land. The finest houses in Japan belong to the woman in scarlet. The licensed government brothel, covering acres of land, is the most beautiful part of the capital. Oriental splendor—a myth in the streets—becomes reality when the portals of the Yoshiwara are crossed.

Out in the blue bay stands the chain of forts built by the shōgun's government after the arrival of Commodore Perry. Behind them rides at anchor the national navy of Japan, all floating the national flag—a red sun on a white field. I easily recognize the old iron-clad *Stonewall*, now the *Adzuma kuan*.

Half-past ten, and we sweep past the entrance to the British legation. The red flag and crosses of England wave aloft, and the red-coated sentinel paces his round. Britons will long remember the legation at Takanawa. Incendiarism and gunpowder plots, murderous attacks by night, and three assassinations by daylight, have made this ground historic. "Killed from behind" are the words that have blotted the Japanese escutcheon with scores of stains as indelible as those on Bluebeard's key. Repeated washing in the fountain of indemnity and blood-money can never cleanse it. Not far from the British legation are the tombs of the Forty-seven rōnins of immortal fame. We have passed the black gate at Shinagawa, and are in the city. I see to the left the Kosatsū—a roofed frame of wood, on which hang boards inscribed in Japanese with edicts centuries old, yet renewed by the present government. I can not read the Chinese ideographs, but I know the meaning of one of them—the slanderous and insulting edict that denounces the Christian religion as a hateful and devilish sect, and hounds on every bigot and informer to ferret out the Christians. This is the foreigner's welcome to Tōkiō in 1871. Does the Japanese capital answer to the description in the old geographies—"a large, park-like city, with a population of 2,500,000?" I shall see. Suburbs are usually unprepossessing, and I reserve my judgment. At eleven o'clock we drive past the splendid Monzēki temple of the Shin sect of Buddhists and into the yard of the Great Hotel at Tsūkiji.