

V.

STUDIES IN THE CAPITAL.

THE foreigner who traces upon his globe or map the outlines of the island empire of Japan, conceives of it as a long, narrow, insular strip of land, stretching from north to south. Seeing that Yezo is in such high, and Kiushiu in such low latitude, he thinks of Yedo and Nagasaki as lying at the two ends of the magnetic needle. To the native, they lie in the line of the sun, the one at its rising, the other at its setting. The reason for this conception of the native, which is thus in rectilinear opposition to that of the foreigner, lies, not in the supposed fact that the Japanese do every thing in a contrary manner from ourselves, or because the images on his retina are not reversed as on ours, but because he has a truer knowledge of his country's topography than the alien. The latter knows of Japan only as a strip of land described in his dogmatic text-books, a fraction in his artificial system; the former knows it as he actually walks, by dwelling on its soil and looking at the sun, the lay of the land, and the pole star. To him, Tōkiō lies in the east, Chōshiu in the west, Hakodaté in the north, and Satsuma in the south.

The native conception of locality in the mikado's empire is the true one. A glance at the map will show that Yezo and a portion of Hondo lie, indeed, inclosed in a narrow line drawn north and south. Japan may be divided into inhabited and uninhabited land, and Yezo must fall within the latter division. Hence, only that part above the thirty-sixth parallel may be called Northern Japan. From Yedo to Nagasaki is the main portion of the empire, in point of historical importance, wealth, and population. Between the thirty-third and thirty-sixth, or within three parallels of latitude, on a belt a little over two hundred miles wide, stretches from east to west, for six hundred miles, the best part of Japan.

Within this belt lies more than a majority of the largest cities, best ports, richest mines, densest centres of population, classic localities, magnificent temples, holy places, tea-plantations, silk districts, rice-

fields, and manufactures. Here, also, have been developed, in times past, the nation's greatest treasures—the best blood, the commanding minds, and the men that have ruled Japan.

It is interesting to note the shifting of the scenes in the drama of Japanese history. In the most ancient times, the ablest men of action and intellect were produced in Yamato, or in the Kinai. In the Middle Ages, they arose in the Kuantō. At the opening of modern history, they sprung from the Tōkaidō (Mino, Owari, Mikawa). In the latest decades, they came from Kiushiu and the south (Chōshiu, Satsuma, Tosa, and Hizen).

An inspection of the map will show a striking configuration of the land, on the southern coast of Hondo, adapting and ordaining it as the site for the great bulk of the nation's intellect, intelligence, population, and wealth. From Kadzusa on the extreme east, to Chōshiu on the extreme west, are found in succession a series of bays, at the head of each of which stands a large city. On the first is the city of Tōkiō (population, 925,000); on the second, Odawara (20,000); on the third, Hamamatsū (50,000); on the fourth, Nagoya (400,000); on the fifth, Ōzaka (600,000); on the sixth, Hiōgo (60,000); on the seventh, Hiroshima (100,000); on the eighth, Shimonoséki (10,000). These lie east and west of each other. These are and were all flourishing cities, but until Iyéyasū's time Yedo was but a village.

It was a bold stroke of policy to make the obscure place the seat of government. It seemed very much to the people of that day and country as it would to us were our capital removed from Washington to Duluth.

The general shape of Tōkiō is that of an egg, with the point to the south, the butt to the north. The yolk of this egg is the castle, or Ō Shiro, a work of vast proportions.

The traveler in our land of steam, in which men are too few and too valuable to be machines, sees heavy work done by the derrick and the engine, and can reckon to a fraction the equivalent for human muscle stored up in a pound of coal. Before the labor of the mediæval masons, he wonders how the pygmies of those days could build such stupendous works as astonish the tourist in Egypt, India, Assyria, China, and Japan, or raise colossal stones, or transport them in positions hundreds of miles from their home in the quarry.

Of architectural works in Japan, the torii, the yashiki, and the shiro, or castle, may be said to be original products. The pagoda is from China. Though far beyond the structures of Egypt or India in æs-

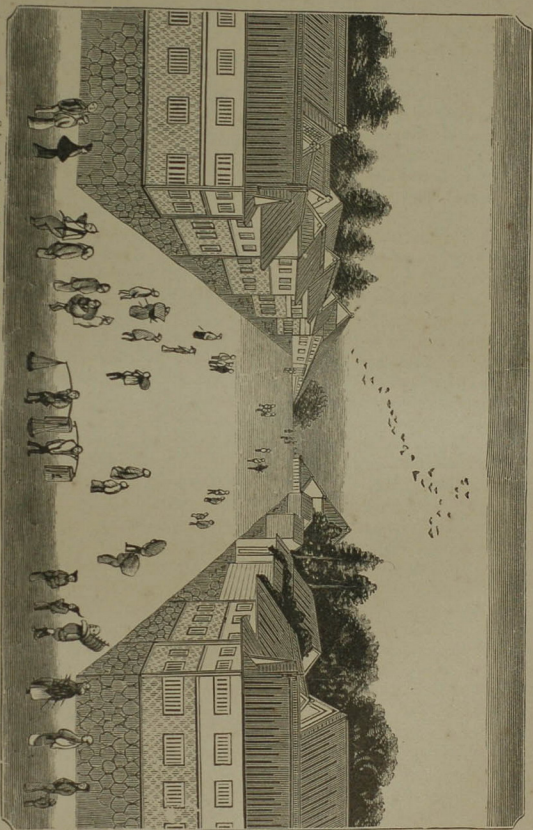
thetic merit, the Japanese castles challenge wonder at their vast extent, and the immense size of the stones in their walls. In the castle of Ōzaka, built by Hidéyoshi, some of the stones are forty feet long, ten feet high, and several feet thick. In the castle of Tōkiō, in the citadel or highest point, the walls have many stones sixteen feet long, six wide, and three thick. These were brought from near Hiōgo, over two hundred miles distant.

In Asiatic countries labor is cheap and abundant. What the American accomplishes by an engine and a ton of coal, the exponent of so many foot-pounds, or horse-power, the Asiatic accomplishes by thousands of human arms. A signal instance of the quick triumph of muscle came under my own observation while in Tōkiō.

A foreigner in the employ of the Japanese Government was consulted in relation to the choice of a site for a model farm, and was shown several eligible places, one of which was included within the grounds of an ex-daimiō, which had been left for years to the rank overgrowth, which, together with the larger trees and bushes, made the soil so rooty, and the whole place so unpromising to the foreigner, that he declared the site was utterly unfit; that several years would be required to bring it into any thing like proper condition for tillage. He then drove off to examine another proposed site. But American ways of thinking were, in this case, at fault.

The Japanese officer in charge immediately and quietly hired eight hundred laborers to clear and smooth the land. They worked in relays, night and day. In one week's time he showed the American "a new site," with which he was delighted. It was chosen for the model farm. It was the same site he had first glanced at. The potential energy lay in the fact that the land, worthless as real estate, being the property of the official, could be sold to the Government for a model farm at the highest of fancy prices, paid out of the national treasury. The actual energy of eight hundred pairs of arms developed a wilderness into leveled farm-fields within a week.

The yashiki is a product of architecture distinctively Japanese. Its meaning is "spread-out house." It is such a homogeneous structure that it strikes the eye as having been cut out of a solid block. It is usually in the form of a hollow square, inclosing from ten thousand to one hundred and sixty thousand square feet of ground. The four sides of the square within are made up of four rows, or four unbroken lines of houses. In the centre are the mansions of the daimiō and his ministers. The lesser retainers occupy the long houses which



Sakurada Avenue In Tokio. Yashiki's of daimios, now occupied by the Foreign Office and War Department.

swans added grace and beauty to the peaceful scene. It was forbidden to fire a gun within five *ri* of the castle. I wondered how foreign sportsmen could resist the temptation.

Let the reader imagine a space of several miles square covered with *yashikis*. To walk through the streets inside the castle enceinte was a monotonous and gloomy task. There was nothing to break the dull uniformity of black or white tiles and windows, except here and there a sworded samurai or a procession. Occasional variety was obtained in a very large *yashiki* by erecting a wall around the entire inclosure, and building the houses inside. This made the monotony worse, since the eye had no relief in looking at windows, in which, perchance, might be a pot of flowers, or peeping eyes. It scarcely added to the cheerfulness to meet no common folk, but only proud and pompous men with two swords, the mark of the Japanese gentleman of feudal days.

The winter head-dress of the Japanese of both sexes is a black cloth cap, fitting close to the skull, with long flaps, which were tied around over the neck, mouth, and nose, exposing only the eyes. The wearing of this cap made a most remarkable difference, according to sex. The male looked fiendishly malignant, like a Spanish brigand, the effect of two scowling eyes being increased by the two swords at his belt. The phrase "he looked daggers at me" had a new significance. With the women, however, the effect was the reverse. A plump, well-wrapped form lost no comeliness; and when one saw two sparkling eyes and a suggestion of rosy cheeks, the imagination was willing to body forth the full oval of the Japanese beauty.

A dinner given in my honor by the ex-prince of Echizen, in his own *yashiki*, enabled me to see in detail one of the best specimens of this style of mansion. Like all the large clans and *kokushiu daimiōs*, Echizen had three *yashikis*—the Superior, Middle, and Inferior. In the second lived the ordinary clansmen, while to the third the servants and lower grade of samurai are assigned. Some of these *yashikis* covered many acres of ground; and the mansions of the Go Sanké families and the great clans of Satsuma, Kaga, Chōshiu, and Chikuzen are known at once upon the map by their immense size and commanding positions. Within their grounds are groves, shrines, cultivated gardens, fish-ponds, hillocks, and artificial landscapes of unique and surpassing beauty. The lord of the mansion dwelt in a central building, approached from the great gate by a wide stone path and grand portico of *kéyaki*-wood. Long, wide corridors, laid with soft

mats, led to the master's chamber. All the wood-work, except certain portions, stood in virgin grain like watered silk, except where relieved here and there by a hard gleam of black lacquer-like enamel. The walls, gorgeously papered with gold, silver, or fanciful and colored designs, characteristic of Japanese art—among which the pine, plum, and cherry tree, the bamboo, lily, the stork, tortoise, and lion, or fans, were the favorites. The sliding doors, or partitions, of which three sides of a Japanese room is composed, were decorated with paintings. Some of the finest specimens of Japanese art I ever saw were in the yashikis of Tōkiō.

The plan of the city of Yedo, conceived by Iyēyasū, was simply that of a great camp. This one idea explains its centre, divisions, and relations. In the heart of this vast encampment was the general's head-quarters—a well-nigh impregnable castle. On the most eligible and commanding sites were the tents of his chief satraps. These tents were yashiki. The architectural prototype of a yashiki is a Japanese tent. In time of war, the general's head-quarters are surrounded by a roofless curtain of wide breadths of canvas stretched perpendicularly on posts, presenting a square front like a wall outside, and a roomy area within, having in its centre the general's tent. In place of this tent put a house; instead of the canvas stretch continuous long houses, forming a hollow square inclosing the mansion, and you have the yashiki. Shallow observers—foreigners, of course—on first seeing these stretched canvas screens, supposed they were "forts," and the crests (*mon*) of the general, "port-holes" for cannon! Yedo, the camp city of the East, was full of these tents, amplified and made permanent in wood and stone.

These edifices made the glory of old Yedo, but Tōkiō sees fewer year by year and fire by fire. They were the growth of the necessities of feudalism. The new age of Japan does not need them, and the next decade, that shall see thousands swept away, will see none rebuilt; and the traveler will look upon a yashiki as one of the many curiosities of Old Japan. Yedo was the city of the Tokugawas, and the camp of clans. Its architectural products sprung from the soil of feudalism. Tōkiō is the national capital, the city of the mikado, and its edifices are at once the exponents of modern necessities and enlightened nationality.