

## VI.

## AMONG THE MEN OF NEW JAPAN.

I SPENT from January 3d to February 16th, 1871, in the new capital of Japan, visiting the famous places in the city and suburbs, seeing the wonderful sights, and endeavoring by study and questioning to reduce to order the myriad impressions that were made upon all my senses like a mimic cannonade. During two weeks I taught as a volunteer in the Imperial College. At the house of the superintendent I met many of the officials in the educational and other departments, learning their ideas and methods of thinking and seeing. Among my novel employments was, upon one occasion, the searching of Wheaton's and other works on international law for rules and precedents covering an imminent case of hostilities in Yokohama harbor. The captain of a French man-of-war, resurrecting one of the exploded regulations of the republic of 1795, was threatening to seize a German merchant ship, which had been sold to the Japanese, and the officials of the Foreign Office had come to their long-trusted American friend for advice and the law's precedents. It came to nothing, however. No seizure was made, nor hostile gun fired. The furore of traveling abroad was then at fever-heat, and thousands of young men hoped to be sent to study abroad, at government expense, where tens only could be chosen. I made a call on Terashima Munénori, the Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, then in Tsükiji: presenting letters from Mr. Hatakéyama Yoshinari, I was received very kindly. Iwakura (to whom I bore letters from his son) and Mr. Ōkubo at that time were on an important political mission to Satsuma, Chōshiu, and Tosa, sent thither by the mikado. The ex-Prince of Echizen gave an entertainment in my honor at his mansion. The daimiōs of Uwajima and Akadzuki, and several of their *karōs* (ministers), were present at the dinner. He presented me with his photograph, with some verses, of the making of which he was very fond. Mr. Arinori Mōri, a young samurai of the Satsuma clan, and a great friend of Iwakura, called to see me, and received letters of introduction to my friends in America. He was then in na-

tive dress, wearing the traditional two swords, the abolition of which he had in vain advocated some months before. He had just received his appointment as *chargé d'affaires* of Japan in the United States. Messrs. Mōri, and Saméshima—since *chargé d'affaires* at Paris, now (1876) Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs in Tōkiō—stood so high in the confidence of Iwakura that they were dubbed, in the political slang of the capital, “the legs of Iwakura.” Mr. Katsū Awa, though absent in Shidzūōka, sent me a very pleasant letter of welcome to Japan. I enjoyed a delightful call on Mr. Kanda, the ex-President or Speaker of the House of Assembly, in which Mr. Mōri had argued reforms, the second deliberative body that had been called into existence, according to the oath of the mikado in Kīōto, in 1868, that representative institutions should be formed. I found Mr. Kanda a student of English and American literature, and an earnest thinker. His son, a bright lad, was to accompany Mr. Mōri to America. I also met a number of the prominent and rising men of the country, especially those who had been active in the late revolution. The mikado was beginning to ride out in public; and I saw at various times a number of the *kugé*, both ladies and gentlemen, in their ancient, gorgeous costumes, with their retainers and insignia. I witnessed, also, a grand review of the imperial army, a wrestling-match, exhibitions of acrobatics and jugglery, theatrical performances, and many things in the political, social, and military world that will never again be seen in Japan. I visited the first hospital opened in Tōkiō, by Matsumoto, and the excellent school of Fukuzawa, rival of the Imperial College. None of the large modern buildings in European style, which now adorn the city, were then built. The city was then more Yedo than Tōkiō.

I repeatedly visited Ōji, so often described by Oliphant and others; Mэгuro, near which are the graves of the lovers, “Gompachi and Komurasaki;” Takanawa, the Mecca of Japanese loyalty, where are the tombs and statues of the forty-seven rōnins, and of their lord, whom they died to avenge; Kamé Ido, the memorial of the deified martyr, Sugawara Michizané; Shiba, Uyéno, Mukōjima, and the places so well known to residents and tourists, the sight of which but added zest to an appetite for seeing all that is dear to a Japanese, which a residence of years failed to cloy. I was several times at Zempukujī (Temple of Peace and Happiness), one of the oldest shrines of the Shin sect of Buddhists, founded by Shinran himself, who with his own hands planted the wonderful old *jinko*-tree, which still flourishes. Within the temple grounds were the buildings of the legation of the

United States of America. Here had dwelt successively Ministers Townsend Harris, Robert H. Pruyn, and General Van Valkenbergh. United States Vice-consul C. O. Shepherd was then occupying the premises. I noticed a somewhat dusty portrait of Franklin Pierce hung on the walls of one of the inner empty rooms. The one bright oasis spot during his barren administration was the success of Perry's mission, and the opening of Japan to the world. The glory of the great United States had been here maintained, by its Government never paying any rent for its tenantry of buildings, and by extorting "indemnities" for every accidental fire, for every provoked injury, and even for every man killed in the open and active hostilities of war, and in joining the governments of Europe in keeping the feeble empire crushed under diplomacy, backed by ships and cannon.

One of the most important persons for me was a good interpreter. A tongue was more than a right arm. To procure one of first-rate abilities was difficult. When the embassy, sent out by the ill-starred Ii Kamon no kami, visited Philadelphia, I had frequently seen a lively young man whom every one called "Tommy," who had made a decidedly pleasant impression upon the ladies and the Americans generally. "Tommy" was at this time in Tōkiō. The Echizen officers went to him and asked him to accept the position of interpreter, at a salary of one thousand dollars, gold, per annum. This was tempting pay to a Japanese; but the foreignized Tommy preferred metropolitan life, and the prospect of official promotion, to regular duties in an interior province. They then sought among the corps of interpreters in the Imperial College. The choice fell upon Iwabuchi (rock-edge), who, fortunately for me, accepted, and we were introduced. This gentleman was about twenty years old, with broad, high forehead, luxuriant hair cut in foreign style, keen, dancing black eyes, and blushing face. He was a rōnin samurai of secondary rank, and rather well educated. His father had been a writing-master in Sakura, Shimōsa, and Iwabuchi was an elegant writer. He wore but one sword. He was of delicate frame, his face lighted by intellect, softened by his habitual meekness, but prevented by a trace of slyness from being noble. He seemed the very type of a Japanese gentleman of letters. He was as gentle as a lady. In his checkered experience at Hakodaté and other cities, he had brushed against the Briton, the Yankee, the Frenchman, and the Russian. At first shy and retiring, he warmed into friendship. In his merry moods he would astonish me by humming familiar tunes, and recall a whole chapter of home memories by sing-

ing snatches of American college and street songs. In his angry moods, when American steel struck Japanese flint, his eyes would snap fire and his frame quiver. For over a year Iwabuchi was invaluable to me, until my own articulation became bi-lingual; but from first to last, notwithstanding occasional friction, arising from the difference in American and Japanese psychology, we continued, and remain, fast friends.

My business with the officers of the Echizen clan was finished. I was engaged to teach the physical sciences in the city of Fukui, the capital of the province, two hundred miles west of Tōkiō, and twelve miles from the Sea of Japan. In accordance with custom observed between foreigners and Japanese, we made a contract, which, after passing the inspection and receiving the approval of the Guai Mu Shō (Office of Foreign Affairs), was written out in duplicate in imposing Chinese characters, and in plain English. I agreed to teach chemistry and physics for the space of three years, and "not to enter into any trading operations with native merchants." The insertion of a comic clause, very funny indeed to the American, but quite justifiable by the bitter experience of the Japanese, was, that the teacher must not get drunk.

They, on their side, agreed to pay my salary; to build me a house after the European style; and after three years to return me safely to Yokohama; to hand my corpse over to the United States Consul if I should die, or carry me to him should I be disabled through sickness. Nothing was said concerning religion in any reference whatever, but perfect freedom from all duties whatsoever was guaranteed me on Sundays; and I had absolute liberty to speak, teach, or do as I pleased in my own house.

As an illustration of the extreme jealousy with which the mikado's ministers guarded the supremacy of the national government, the first draft of the contract, made by myself, was rejected by the Foreign Office because I had written "the government of Fukui," instead of the "local authorities," a correction which appeared in the final documents.

I made the acquaintance of several of the daimiōs, and many retainers of various clans. A Fukui samurai, whom I shall call Darémo, and who knew to a rung the exact status of every one on the social ladder, always informed me as to the rank of the various personages whom I met as host or guest. I bought the latest copy of the *Bu Kuan* (Mirror of the Military Families), which he explained and trans-

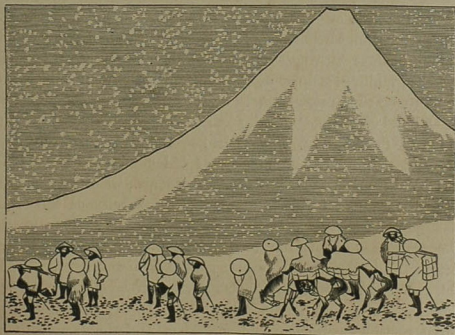
lated for me. In discussing each one, his nose rose and fell with the figures before him. "That gentleman is only a *karō* of a 10,000 koku daimiō." "This is himself, a fudai daimiō of 15,000 koku." With profound indifference, I would be informed that the person who called on me to inquire after his brother in New York was "merely a samurai of a 30,000 koku clan." That gentleman whose politeness so impressed me was "a hatamoto of 800 koku; but he was very poor since the restoration." Darémo's congratulations were showered thick and fast when I dined with the *kokushiu* Echizen (360,000 koku), and Uwajima (100,000 koku), with five or six *karōs*. He also translated for me the letters I received from distinguished Japanese officers. With the aid of the *Bu Kuan* and Darémo, I was soon able to distinguish many of the rising and falling men of Japan.

I had seen the great objects of interest to a tourist. I had feasted my eyes on novelty and a new life, yet the freshness of continual glad surprise was not yet lost. I had seen the old glory of Yedo in ruins, and the new national life of Japan emerging from Tōkiō in chaos. I had stood face to face with paganism for the first time. I had felt the heart of Japan pulsing with new life, and had seen her youth drinking at the fountains of Western science. I had tasted the hospitality of one of the "beginners of a better time." I had learned the power of the keen sword. For the first time I had experience of paganism, feudalism, earthquakes, Asiatic life and morality. I had seen how long contact with heathen life and circumstances slowly disintegrates the granite principles of eternal right, once held by men reared in a more bracing moral atmosphere. I met scores of white men, from Old and New England, who had long since forgotten the difference between right and wrong. I had seen also the surface of Japan. I was glad to go into the interior. I bid good-bye to Tōkiō, and went to Yokohama to take the steamer to Kobé, whence I should go, *viá* Lake Biwa, and over the mountains to the city of the Well of Blessing, Fukui.

Our party made rendezvous at a native hotel. It was to be both my escort and following. The former consisted of my interpreter, Iwabuchi, one of the teachers of English in the university; Nakamura, the soldier-guard, who had fought in the late civil war; and the treasurer, Emori, a polished gentleman, and shrewd man of the Japanese world. There were two servants, and, with my own cook and his wife, we made up a party of eight persons, with as many characters and dispositions as faces. The ship to take us to Kobé was one of the fine

steamers of the Pacific Mail Company's fleet, the *Oregonian*. As several days would elapse before her departure, I made a visit to Kanazawa, Kamakura, Enoshima, and Fujisawa, with Nakamura, and an American friend who spoke Japanese fluently. That visit was afterward repeated many times. Every spot made famous by Yoritomo, Yoshitsuné, Semman and Kugiō, the Hōjō, Nitta Yoshisada, Nichiren, and the Ashikaga, was seen over and over again, until the life of old Japan became as vivid to me as the thrilling scenes of our own late war. Besides the architectural remains of these classic places, is a rich museum of armor, weapons, and other mediæval antiquities in the temple on Tsuruga-ōka, in Kamakura.

On our ride back, Fuji, all in white, loomed up grandly. A flurry of snow added to its beauty. In such a snow-shower the artist must have made the spirited sketch here reproduced. Snow rarely falls on the Tōkaidō to a depth greater than two inches, and usually neither hoof nor sandal, as in the cut, sinks beneath its level. The Japanese, however, make a great fuss over a little cold. They go about with their hands in their sleeves, which stick out like the wings of a trussed turkey, repeating "*samui, samui*" (cold, cold), until it loses all originality.



Travelers on the Tōkaidō in a Snow-storm. Fuji san.