

VIII.

RECEPTION BY THE DAIMIŌ.—MY STUDENTS.

THE next day was a Sabbath in a Sabbathless land. I awoke to find a perfect day—a heaven of cloudless blue, and every thing quiet and still. How should I spend Sunday here? There were no church-bells pealing, no church, no pews, no pulpit, no street-cars, no pavement, no Sunday-school, no familiar friends. I walked to the gate of the court-yard and looked out upon the street. Business and traffic were going on as usual. The samurai on clogs, in his silk and crested coat, with swords in girdle and cue on clean-shorn crown, was walking on, in his dignity, as the lord of society. The priest, in his flowing crape and brocade collar, with shaven head, and rosary on



On the Tow-path. (Hokusai.)

wrist, was on his way to the temple. The merchant, in his plain, wadded cotton clothes, tight breeches, and white-thonged sandals of straw, was thinking of his bargains. The laborer, half naked and half covered in the fabrics of Eden, in sandals of rice-straw, tunic, and hat, making himself a fulcrum for his scale-like method of carrying heavy burdens, passed staggering by. A file of his brethren, with hats in the shape of inverted wash-bowls, engaged on some heavy work at the river-side, were resting on a log, looking, in the distance, like a row of exaggerated toad-stools. The seller of fish, vegetables, oil, and

bean-cheese, each uttering his trade-cry, ambled on. On the opposite shore, with ropes over their shoulders, a gang of straw-clad men—not mules—were towing a boat up stream, against the current.

I returned indoors. Breakfast over, I sought the companionship of my dear, silent friends, which I had brought with me, and which had not yet been arranged, though I had already made my plans for a book-case. It was about half-past nine, when the gate at the end of the court-yard opened, and in rode Nakamura, my guard of yesterday. Behind him came three of the daimiō's grooms, one of them leading a gorgeously caparisoned horse. The grooms were dressed in only one garment, a loose blue coat coming to a little below the hips, with socks on his feet, and the usual white loin-cloth around his waist. On the back of his coat was the crest of his prince. The horse was the most richly dressed. It was decked as if for a tournament or ball. Its tail was incased in a long bag of figured blue silk, which was tied at the root with red silk cord and tassels. The hair of the mane and top-knot was collected into a dozen or more tufts bound round with white silk, and resembling so many brushes or pompons. The saddle was an elaborate piece of furniture, lacquered and gilded with the crests of Tokugawa. The saddle-cloths and flaps were of corrugated leather, stamped in gold. The stirrups were as large as shovels, and the rider, removing his sandals when he mounted, rested the entire soles of his feet in them. The material was bronze, ornamented with a mosaic of silver and gold. The bridle was a scarf of silk, and the bit and halter different from any I had seen elsewhere. From the saddle, crupper, and halter depended silken cords and tassels. Altogether, it reminded me of one of the steeds on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The horse had been sent to convey me to meet the prince and his chief officers, who were to receive me in the main room of the Han Chō, or Government Office. Nakamura was to escort me, and Iwabuchi was to be present, to speak for us.

We mounted and rode along the wide street facing the castle-moat, which was lined on one side by the yashikis of the chief men of the clan, and called Daimiō Avenue. A few minutes' ride brought us to one of the gates called Priests' Gate, and, riding inside of another wall and moat, we reached the main entrance to the Han Chō, and dismounted. The gate was the same as that seen in front of all large yashikis and official places in Japan, like two massive crosses with their arms joined end to end. We passed up the broad stone path through a yard covered with pebbles. Before the door was a large

raised portico or vestibule. Kneeling pages waited to receive us, and an officer in rustling silk came out to welcome us.

We removed our shoes and entered. Passing along a corridor of soft and scrupulously clean mats, we reached the hall of audience, into which we were ushered with due ceremony. The pages and attendants kneeled down, while the daimiō and his six ministers rose to receive us. Tables, chairs, and hand-shakings were new things then, yet they were there. I advanced and bowed to the prince, who approached me and extended his hand, uttering what I afterward learned were words of welcome. After shaking hands, he put an autograph letter in my hand. Iwabuchi from the first had fallen down on his hands, knees, and face, and talked with uplifted eyes. I was next introduced to his long-named high retainers, and then we all sat down to the table. It was piled up with tall pyramids of half-peeled oranges and sliced sponge-cake—the usual orthodox Japanese refreshments. In the centre was a huge bouquet, composed entirely of twigs of plum blossoms and the steely, silver-glossy shoots of a wild plant, surrounded at the base with camellias of many tints, both single and double. The little pages—pretty boys of ten or twelve—brought us tiny cups of tea in metal sockets. As we lifted out the cups, they bowed low, and slid away.

The prince and his ministers handed me their cards, imposing slips of white paper, inscribed with their names and titles in Chinese characters. They were as follows:

Matsudaira Mochiaki, Governor of the Fukui Han; Ogasawara Morinori, *Daisanji* (Great Minister); Murata Ujihisa, *Daisanji* (Great Minister); Sembon Hisanobu (Vice-great Minister); Otani (Minister); Omiya Sadakiyo (Chamberlain).

Then followed a lively conversation, which kept Iwabuchi's two tongues busy for nearly an hour. Icy etiquette melted into good-humor, and good-humor flowed into fun. At the end of that time we had made the mutual discovery that we could get along together very well. American freedom and Japanese ease made strangers friends. Education and culture easily bridge the gulf that lies between two races, religions, and civilizations. I felt perfectly at home in the presence of these courtly and polished gentlemen, and an hour passed very pleasantly.

The daimiō's autograph letter ran as follows:

“It is a matter of congratulation that the President of your country is in good health.

"I greatly rejoice and am obliged to you that you have arrived so promptly from so great distance over seas and mountains, to teach the sciences to the youth of Fukui.

"Concerning matters connected with the school and students, the officers in charge of education will duly consult you.

"As Fukui is a secluded place, you will be inconvenienced in many respects. Whenever you have need of any thing, please make your wants known without ceremony.

"MATSUDAIRA, *Fukui Han-Chiji.*"

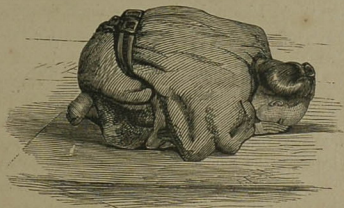
These words struck the key-note of my whole reception in Fukui. During the entire year of my residence, unceasing kindnesses were showered upon me. From the prince and officers to the students, citizens, and the children, who learned to know me and welcome me with smiles and bows and "Good-morning, teacher," I have nothing to record but respect, consideration, sympathy, and kindness. My eyes were opened. I needed no revolver, nor were guards necessary. I won the hearts of the people, and among the happiest memories are those of Fukui.

Among those whom I learned to love was the little son of the daimiö, a sprightly, laughing little fellow, four or five years old, with snapping eyes, full of fun, and as lively as an American boy. Little Matsudaira wore a gold-hilted short sword in his girdle; while a lad of thirteen, his sword-bearer, attended him, to carry the longer badge of rank. His head was shaved, except a round space like a cap, from which a tiny cue projected. The photograph which his father gave me and the wood-cut do but scant justice to the exquisitely delicate brown tint of his skin, flushed with health, his twinkling black eyes, his rosy cheeks, and his arch ways, that convinced his mother that he was the most beautiful child ever born of woman. I often met him in Fukui and, later, in Tökiö. He is to be educated in the United States.



A Little Daimiö. (From a photograph.)

As yet I had seen little of the city in which I expected to dwell for three years. I had reached the goal of my journeyings. Hitherto, in all my travels, Fukui loomed up in my imagination, and, spite of my actual experience of Japanese towns, the ideal Fukui was a grand city. All the excitement of travel was now over, and I was to see the actual Fukui. I rode around the castle circuit, and out into the city, and for a long distance through its streets. I was amazed at the utter poverty of the people, the contemptible houses, and the tumble-down look of the city, as compared with the trim dwellings of an American town. I rode through many streets, expecting at last to emerge into some splendid avenue. I rode in vain; and, as I rode, the scales fell from my eyes. There was no more excitement now to weave films of glamour before my vision. I saw through the achromatic glasses of actuality. I realized what a Japanese—an Asiatic city—was. All the houses of wood, the people poor, the streets muddy, few signs of wealth, no splendid shops. Talk of Oriental magnificence and luxury! What nonsense! I was disgusted. My heart sunk. A desperate fit of the blues seized me. I returned home, to chew the cud of gloomy reflections.



Servant before his Master.

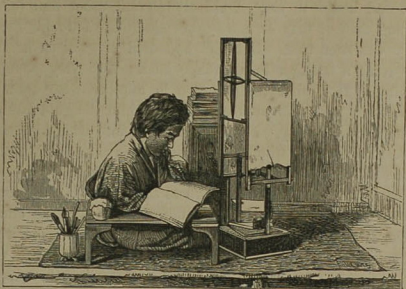
Fukui was the home of Kusakabé, my former student, who died in New Brunswick. His father had heard of my coming. In the afternoon he called to see me. A lacquered trayful of very fine oranges, on which lay the peculiarly folded paper, betokening a gift, and a slip of paper written with Chinese characters—the visiting-card—was handed me by Sahei, who, as usual, fell down on all fours, with face on his hands, as though whispering to the floor. It was the Oriental way of visiting with a gift in the hand. He had come to the house by way of the rear instead of the front gate, in token of humility on

his part and honor to me. I bid my servant usher him in, and a sad-looking man of fifty or more years entered. Through Iwabuchi his story was soon told. His wife had died of grief on hearing of her son dying a stranger in a strange land. Two very young sons were living. His other children, five in number, were dead. His house was left unto him desolate. I gave him the gold key of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, of Rutgers College, into which his son had been elected, he having stood at the head of his class. His father received the emblem reverently, lifting it to his forehead.

On the next day my regular work was to begin. Horses were sent again, and I rode to the school, a building which was the citadel of the castle, and was once the residence of the old prince. I was met by the officers of the school in the room I was to occupy. On the table were sponge-cake, oranges, and plum-blossom bouquets, as usual, while the omnipresent tea was served, and the tiny pipes were smoked. It was very evident that the men who had been desirous of a teacher of chemistry had very nebulous ideas about what that science was. However, they were ready, with money and patience, to furnish the necessary apparatus and lecture-room; and our preliminaries being agreed on, I was conducted through the other rooms to see the sights of the school.

I was surprised to find it so large and flourishing. There were in all about eight hundred students, comprised in the English, Chinese, Japanese, medical, and military departments. A few had been studying English for two or three years, under native teachers who had been in Nagasaki. In the medical department I found a good collection of Dutch books, chiefly medical and scientific, and a fine pair of French dissection models, of both varieties of the human body. In the military school was a library of foreign works on military subjects, chiefly in English, several of which had been translated into Japanese. In one part of the yard young men, book, diagram, or trowel in hand, were constructing a miniature earthwork. The school library, of English and American books—among which were all of Kusakabé's—was quite respectable. In the Chinese school I found thousands of boxes, with sliding lids, filled with Chinese and Japanese books. Several hundred boys and young men were squatted on the floor, with their teachers, reading or committing lessons to memory, or writing the Chinese characters. Some had already cut off their top-knots.*

* In one of the popular street-songs hawked about and sung in the streets of



Student burning the Midnight Oil. (Photograph from life.)

At one end of the buildings were large, open places devoted to physical exercise. Several exhibitions of trials of skill in fencing and wrestling were then made for my benefit. Six of the students repaired to the armory and put on the defensive mail, to shield themselves in the rough work before them—as Japanese swords are for use with both hands, having double-handed hilts without guards. The foils for fencing are made of round, split bamboo, and a good blow will make one smart, and bruise the flesh. So the fencing-master and students first donned a corselet, with shoulder-plates of hardened hide padded within, and heavily padded gauntlets. On their heads were wadded caps, having a barred visor of stout iron grating. Taking their places, with swords crossed, they set to. All the passes are cut-

Fukui, Ōzaka, and Tōkiō, at this time was a stanza satirizing the three fashions of wearing the hair: in Western style; in the fashion of the Ōsei, or ante-feudal era; and the orthodox samurai mode. One's political proclivities were thus expressed by his hair. An unshaven head with all the hair worn, but made into a top-knot cue, marked the wearer as a "mikado-reverencer," or believer in the principles of the Ōsei era. A head shaven on the mid-scalp and temples, with cue, denoted one who clung to the mediæval ideals of feudalism. A short-haired head, clipped and cueless, like a Westerner, was a sign of foreignizing tendencies. The students led this fashion. The cut represents one at night, studying by the light of his paper lantern, inside which is a dish of oil, with pith wick. To the right of his little study-table are his brush-pens, in their usual porcelain receptacle; and behind him is his library or book-case, in which the books are ranged, with their edges outward. In a Japanese library, the titles of all works are marked on their edge as well as the cover.

ting blows, thrusting being unknown. Pretty severe whacks are given, and some bruising done, spite of armor. Foils are used up like lances in a tournament. The young men kept up the mimic battle for fifteen minutes, or as long as their wind and muscle lasted, and the severe ordeal was over, the victory being won by those who had given what would have been disabling wounds had swords been used. Then followed, by another set of students, the spear exercise. Long spears were used first, and several fine passes in *carte* and *tierce* were made; the offensive and defensive were tried alternately, to show me all the various thrusts and foils of the science.

The party having short spears succeeded, the manœuvres being different. So far it was mere scientific display, no one being severely punched. At a signal of the clappers another set took blunt spears, leaped into the arena, and a sham fight began, the thrusts being real lunges that knocked down and bruised the limbs or damaged the breathing apparatus of the man put *hors du combat* quite badly. In about five minutes half the party were down, and the remainder, all crack lances, continued the battle for several minutes longer, with some fine display, but no mortal thrusts. They were called off, and the men with sword and cross-spear began a trial of skill. The cross-spear is long, like a halberd, with a two-edged blade set at right angles across it within six inches from the top. It is intended especially for defense against a sword, or a horse soldier. In this instance, one or two of the swordsmen were jerked to the floor or had their helmets torn off; while, on the other side, the halberdiers suffered by having their poles struck by severing blows of their opponents' swords or actually received the "pear-splitter" stroke which was supposed to cleave their skulls.

Next followed wrestling. Though a cold day in winter, the students were dressed only in coarse sleeveless coats of hemp cloth. Approaching each other, they clinched and threw. The object seemed to be to show how an unarmed man might defend himself. Wrestling and throwings were followed by sham exhibitions that bore a frightful resemblance to real choking, dislocation of arm, wringing of the neck, etc. Throughout the exhibition, the contestants, while attacking each other, uttered unearthly yells and exclamations. I was highly impressed with the display, and could not fail to admire the splendid, manly physique of many of the lads.

I waited to see the school dismissed, that I might see my pupils in the open air. At the tapping of the clapperless bell, the students put

away their brushes, ink-stones, and sticks of ink, wrapped up their books and portable matter in square pieces of silk or calico, making neat bundles; put their short swords, which lay at their sides, in their girdles; and each and all bowing low, with face to the floor, to their teachers, rose up and went, first, to the sword-room to put on their long swords. This was a large apartment near the entrance, in which were rows of numbered racks, containing seven hundred or more swords. Each student presented his check or ticket of branded pine wood, and his sword was handed him by one of the keepers. Thrusting it in his girdle, and adjusting the pair, each scholar passed to the clog-room, where seven hundred pairs of clogs or sandals were stowed in numbered order. These set on the ground, and the owner's toes bifurcating into the thong, the student added a half-cubit to his stature, and trudged homeward. The scraping and clatter of hundreds of wooden clogs over the long stone bridge were deafening. All were bare-headed, with the top-knot, cue, and shaven mid-scalp, most of them with bare feet on their clogs, and with their characteristic dress, swagger, fierce looks, bare skin exposed at the scalp, neck, arms, calves, and feet, with their murderous swords in their belts, they impressed upon my memory a picture of feudalism I shall never forget.

As I walked, I wondered how long it would require to civilize such "barbarians." Here were nearly a thousand young samurai. What was one teacher among so many? Could it be possible that these could be trained to be disciplined students? These were my thoughts then. A few months later, and I had won their confidence and love. I found they were quite able to instruct me in many things. I need fear to lose neither politeness nor sense of honor among these earnest youth. In pride and dignity of character, in diligence, courage, gentlemanly conduct, refinement and affection, truth and honesty, good morals, in so far as I knew or could see, they were my peers. Love is always blind, they say. Was it so in this case?