

LOUIS LLOYD'S LETTER.

WE smile at the results of foreign influence upon Japanese dress. We deplore the effect of foreign intercourse upon Japanese manners. We grow serious when we contemplate the introduction of foreign ideas into Japanese art. Though, taking all things into consideration, the achievements of the Japanese in foreign music, for instance, are really remarkable, they are purely mechanical; while many of the objects they make for exportation, the enormities they permit themselves when decorating in so-called European style, the monstrously hideous arrangements they present you as likely at once to win the foreigner's favour, prove not only an utter misapprehension of our modern ideas of art, but, I fear, betray a certain unwarrantable weakness in their own creed.

I visited, the other day, the Girls' Industrial School of Tokyo. Like the musical academy and other institutions, entirely under Japanese supervision, it was not imposing. It consisted of rooms half native, half European, connected by outside verandas. But I found that modest wooden building with its two hundred clever, hard-working pupils far more promising than a structure of stone and mortar with little beside a name. And this disregard for the merely superficial, this indifference to environment you find everywhere among Japanese artists and students, from the potter, who lives in a house which the smallest bit of his work would buy many times, to the most advanced scholar, who attends a school which might easily be rivalled in appearance by one in our country towns.

The Industrial School is a private institution. Its pupils are from the working class. Though they are taught reading and writing, and how to embroider *à la Japonaise*, one of the school's chief objects is to teach them how to sew in the foreign style, to design for the foreign market, or to make objects for natives who have decided to live as we do.

The first room we visited was the one where the pupils' work is sold, and where orders are taken. There were there piles of painted China plaques and embroidered handkerchiefs, and there was brought in, for my especial benefit, the latest production of the artificial flower department. They carried it with reverence; it was monumental. They exposed it with ill-concealed pride; it was a feat. The Director and the ladies in charge contemplated it with as much wonder and admiration, and as little comprehension as a Japanese parent, who only knows his own language, might listen to an English essay of his offspring. The essay was a huge ball of beautifully made flowers, but the flowers, of every kind, of every hue, were bunched together utterly regardless of colour into one of those preposterous bouquets our great aunts send us from the country. And to crown all, from one part dropped a long tassel of scarlet silk, and from the other, a long string of vivid green. This was European. This was to be hung up in an Europeanized house. This was the work of young girls who had been taught only a few years before to arrange flowers in the exquisitely artistic Japanese way—a spray of red berries, or a branch of plum blossoms, or a chrysanthemum stands alone in a vase. Were the little artists satisfied with their work? Had they no qualms of conscience? Did they realize what they had done? Or was every personal preference swallowed in the one desire, to march onwards (?) When asked my opinion of the flower-ball, I was coward enough to pronounce it beautiful. I longed to tell them how hideous I really found the affair, how their own charming ideas about the arrangement of flowers were far superior to ours, and how they should have pluck and independence enough to stand out against any and every European fashion till they found following it absolutely necessary, or till they were persuaded it was better than their own. But, like others, I flattered and passed on.

We climbed a flight of steps as steep as a ladder. We went into a small room where young girls of sixteen were embroidering most wonderfully. I don't know whether I like Japanese embroidery. The oft-recurring cock with the ruddy tail on dark blue satin, we should call vulgar, if it were possible to associate vulgarity with anything Japanese, and the storks and flowers are executed so precisely that they resemble machine work far too closely. But whatever our opinion of the result of their labours might have been, the skill of these dainty creatures was simply astounding, their pretty absorption in their work worthy of the most consummate European artist.

All those young girls, the Director told us, worked from their own designs. The next class we inspected was one of peculiar interest. The long tables were crowded. Upon the tables stood perhaps a dozen *hibachis*—those boxes holding burning charcoal. Over the charcoal had been placed light iron frames, and upon the frames were stretched white silk handkerchiefs. Each of the pupils had a handkerchief to herself, and with a sharply pointed brush painted in its corners, its centre, and along its edges the fancies of her clever little head. But those skilful little designers were not confining their energies to handkerchiefs for foreigners, they were making also exquisite patterns for Japanese materials.

After seeing the drawing class, we glanced into a room where some ten or twelve girls were all squatted upon the floor knitting; into another, where they were making battle-dores, very artistic battle-dores, with paper ladies' faces upon them in *haut relief*. About these faces was stuck real hair, and over these paper ladies' necks was folded a bit of real *kimono*. Then we looked in upon the busy little dress-makers and finally upon the maidens who had executed the flower-ball. There were no more flower-balls in process of construction when we entered, but some of the girls were making plum-blossoms and sticking them

deftly upon real plum-tree branches. If one could countenance artificial flower-making at all, one would have approved very enthusiastically of this exquisite work, so perfect an imitation, so simple, so thoroughly Japanese.

"And where will these young girls go after they have finished their course of study here?" I asked the Director. "Into factories?"

"Oh no," he replied, "each will work in her own home."

And so I pictured them, not in some hideous building wearing their poor little lives away amidst the din and clatter, working like galley-slaves, but each living her own free life, evolving her pretty fancies at will, each a true artist.

The Industrial School has been in existence only two years, but the progress it has already made promises fairly that it will be in no respect behind similar Japanese educational institutions. Higher praise than this I cannot give.

Among other recent results of the European influence in Japan is the introduction of that pious fraud, the Charity Bazaar, until quite recently it was unknown. Though the first which they held in Tokyo created a perfect furore, the zeal of the Japanese ladies in duping, and the willingness of the Japanese gentlemen to be duped, seem to have abated but little. But then you see the duping as it is carried on by Japanese ladies is so utterly different from duping as it is carried on by any other ladies, that you rather wish they would dupe you than otherwise.

The Charity Bazaar we went to see was a very swell Bazaar indeed. It was held in the Roku-mei-kan Club-house, a club-house in which, on ordinary occasions, the Japanese gentlemen enjoy the privilege of their European brothers, and in which, on extraordinary ones, are given concerts, and all the balls by people whose houses are too small for them to entertain at home. The Roku-mei-kan bazaar was organized after the most approved Western fashion, but the sellers were not Western, and the wares, a Japanese medley, such as we had never seen before, comprised the daintiest Japanese articles, Europeanized Japanese work, and purely European things.

The keen-eyed lady usually stationed near the entrance of our own fairs, and who is always ready for the unwary with a screen painted by her daughter, or some pin-cushions of her own manufacture, was replaced at the Roku-mei-kan by a bewitching creature in pale gray *kimono*, who slipped her arm through yours with charming *naïveté*, had you at her table before you knew where you were, and said, with a gentle, perfectly irresistible accent, "Don't you buy?" And what this lady had to sell were lacquered boxes, fans, bamboo vases, native brocade for *obis* or sashes, one or two hats that you might have seen in a Western milliner's shop last year, a white shirt front, and one of the preposterous flower-balls. The Japanese ladies don't do fancy-work as a rule, and hence their wares, I suppose.

The temptations of the lady in the pale gray *kimono* were as difficult to withstand as temptations from a lady in a pale gray *kimono* usually are. She tried to entice us with the flower-ball. We murmured, "Very pretty," and attempted to pass on, but, in an instant, she presented a bamboo vase. Finding us smilingly impervious to the vase, she suggested a hat, or perhaps—"Don't you buy?" and she brought down the shirt front which was swinging beside the flower-ball. "Very pretty," we repeated, but the lady gave us a playful little tap and echoed, "Very pretty, but all is very pretty; don't you buy?" We bought. We bought a five-sen fan for fifty, a three-sen straw box for sixty, and then the lady renewed her efforts; but Garth thought that she had enough to answer for, and we escaped.

At the Roku-mei-kan bazaar there were dames and maidens in foreign clothes, and dames and maidens in Japanese dresses. It is the fashion in Japan, among foreigners, to deplore the abandonment of the native costume, and a French gentleman informed me that this abandonment was one of the proofs that the Japanese *n'avaient pas la fierté de leur race*. An Englishman, whom I met, grew quite sentimental over little Miss Chrysanthemum's having put on French boots, a gown with a *tournure*, and all the constraints necessary to a modern European toilette. He even went so far as to say that the Japanese style ought to be adopted by foreign ladies. The Frenchman's ideas were superficial, the Britisher's, born of a tea house. If the Japanese are to stand on an equal footing with European nations, the changing of their clothes is very nearly, if not quite, as necessary as the changing of their customs. They see this. They have gone far, and they have gone quickly; but they have not gone far enough as yet to save themselves from ridicule, nor quickly enough to be able to substitute a wasp-wasted damsel for the bewitching creatures whose Venus figures the *kimono* and *obi* or sash dissembled so skilfully. And this is the cause of all the vain regrets you hear. But, though we have no more right to expect the Japanese to hold to their native costume, because it is becoming and picturesque, than that modern Romans should wear the toga, we may reasonably hope that the Japanese will realize in dress what we would have them realize in everything else—that adoption of our civilization should not mean complete abandonment of all phases of theirs; that little Miss Chrysanthemum, despite her Parisian toilette and high heels and hat, need not think it a necessary part of her metamorphosis to forget the simple grace and gentleness and kindness that make the Japanese maiden the most fascinating in the world.

LOUIS LLOYD.

THE THINGS OF THE PAST.

DAYS of the past, how feathery-footed and feathery-hearted were you!

Floating between earth's tender green, and heaven's unclouded blue.

(But now the days bring work in their hands, and their tread is orderly.

They tell me naught of the ways of the birds, and the wood's deep reverie.)

Dreams of the past, oh, dreams of the dawn, of rose-coloured sky and dew!

When the angels of God possessed the earth, and the earth itself was new.

(But now it is plain, prosaic forenoon, and ah, how the cynical sun,

Brings out the evils and ills of life, and the work that was badly done.)

Hopes of the past, how far you flew, so far you never came back;

Early at morning and late at night I looked on your shining track.

(But now the bright-winged creatures are caged, and the cage is pretty and neat;

The water is good—the outlook is fine—they have food enough to eat!)

Joys of the past, you grew as thick as grass on a soft June day,

You covered me over, and hid me from sight, as down in your breast I lay.

(But now—oh, shallow grass-depth of bliss, could you but reach up to my heart,

'Twere worth while growing, were it just for the knowing that life and joy cannot part.)

Loves of the past—they were poets then—I gathered them great and small,

Gathered and crowded them close in my heart, and loved and worshipped them all.

(But now some poets are carpenters, and their work alas, I can see

Is finely turned, and clever, and very good—for carpentry.)

Heart of the past, how you leaped for joy alone 'neath the lonely sky.

When the world was dark, and the blood ran quick, and the galloping winds went by.

(But now the winds—my playfellows—they whistle and shout in vain—

Would I might steal back for one last rout and revel with them again!)

Pain of the past, your mourning robe was wondrous black and deep;

On a tide of tears you closed your eyes, and then—you smiled in your sleep.

(But now you wear a white, white robe, yet I know that your heart is deep;

And though the tears have fled with the years, you sometimes smile in your sleep.)

Friends of the past, you have utterly gone, as though you never had birth;

For children are lost in older frames more oft than they are in earth.

Ghost of the past, my heart is sore, but you will haunt me yet;

Leave me I pray you, but not for long—not till I learn to forget.

ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.—II.

IF we take a general survey of England and her colonies, we cannot help noting the following condition of things: In England, there is a small and confined area, teeming with a vast and busy population; a country too small to produce food enough for the millions that occupy it, and therefore annually spending great sums to import the necessities of life; a population so crowded and so growing that swarms are annually thrown off, like bees from the parent hive, to seek the means of livelihood in other lands; a population so industrious and active that the place may almost be called the workshop of the world, into which, from many lands, great quantities of raw material are annually poured, to pass through the factory and be sent out again as manufactured goods. In the colonies, on the other hand, there are vast tracts of rich and unoccupied land, crying out, as it were, for people to come and cultivate them; lands capable of producing all the food that Great Britain could consume, and yet lying fallow and unused; a population so sparse and scattered that in a radius of one hundred miles one could not gather enough to make a respectable town. Should not these conditions, like the two sides of an algebraic equation, be made to satisfy each other? England has a large surplus population annually seeking homes elsewhere: Canada has great unoccupied lands that only need people to cultivate them; England has annually to import great quantities of food to maintain her population: Canada can produce the food England needs if only the people come here to labour; England constantly needs enlarged mar-