

changed, as it inevitably must, into something more European, when amusement, thanks to our civilization, shall have become more complicated, and romance as dead in Japan as it is at home.

Even you, I think, who have had no education in Japanese standards of feminine beauty, would find a strange new charm in the face before me. It has the dignity of an old-fashioned duchess and the unconsciousness of a child. Despite the classic regularity of its small features there is a world of sweetness about its funny little painted mouth, and all in trying only to please it captivates. O Mitsu San, Miss Honey, is written on the tiny card; this is O Mitsu San, the Japanese ideal of yesterday.

One mild evening when a full moon was rising lazily over Tokyo, and the sky had emptied half its burden of stars into the moat, when the dark palace grounds before our house seemed full of a fantastic mystery, and the city at our feet a lantern studded mist, we suddenly longed for a little romance, Garth and I. It mattered not what the romance might be so long as it took us out into the witchery of the moonlight of Tokyo streets. We wondered how we could carry out Taro San's suggestion of passing a genuine Japanese evening in a quaint out-of-the-way tea-house, and were contemplating the advisability of taking our servant, Buddha, as guide, interpreter, and chaperon, when Taro San himself made his appearance with the announcement that he had prepared an entertainment for us in a certain *chaya* off the Mukojima Cherry-Blossom road, at which Miss Honey would sing and play her *samisen*.

So we went forth, Garth, Taro San, and I, down the steep hill that leads from Kudau to the city, through the deserted streets with their dimly lit houses, looking little better than huge paper lanterns set down by the wayside, past the moats and out into the eccentric shadows of the avenue of leafless cherry trees. It was very still. We could only hear the clap-clap, clap-clap, of the watchman making their rounds, the soft laughter and the twanging of the *samisen* from the tea-houses, and the even patter of the coolies' feet as our *jirikishas* flitted along with quite a delicious air of mystery. Tokyo has no night, at least nothing that we call night. Those of her citizens who would be particularly amused find their pleasures at a *chaya*, and others retire quietly under their *futons* at nightfall. Theatres are open only in the day-time, and, besides the garden parties, I know of no other forms of Japanese diversion. But somehow one never thinks of the Japanese as saying "Upon such a day, at such an hour, doing such a thing I shall be amused." Pleasure with him is not a final reward, but a subtle something leavening the whole. The artist needs no greater delight than he finds in his work. The existence of the little servant is one subdued laugh. And the labourer, straining and panting while he drags his heavy load, still smiles as if it were play, and takes every step to the sound of a lustily shouted refrain. I thought about these things hurrying along in the moonlight, and thought of something else which saddened me. All this beautiful, strange, free life was going to end. There was no help for it. If Japan wished to be one of us—and I knew she did wish it—she must do as we do. We would teach her how art was a labour, and labour a drudgery, how the artist should find recreation elsewhere than in his art, and the working man should look upon life as an irremediable evil mixed with whiskey, how much more civilized people were who read Zola and were bored by Wagner, than those who wondered over the story of the Forty-Seven Ronin and found their delight in O Mitsu San's playing, how difficult a thing it was to get pleasure and how when she thought she had it she should not rest content until she had analysed it. We would fill her mind with unattainable ideals and her soul with the sublime discontent of civilization. Poor precocious child of the East, whom I saw so blindly ambitious, so fatally anxious to learn our ways and follow them. Would we save nothing of her beautiful childhood for her? Would we not tell her to preserve as her independence those instincts for which we try in vain to find a substitute by education.

But our *jirikishas* had stopped. The tea-house was a quarter of a mile distant across the rice fields which stretched, inundated with water, on either side of the pathway. Close by the tea-house we could see the low, carved roof of a temple, and in the tea-house garden, a tiny Shinto shrine. There was a lake too in the garden where the wonderful wisteria blossoms would be able to contemplate their loveliness a few months hence. But now everything was quite bare; the country seemed only a delicate sketch waiting for the paintbrush of spring.

The mistress of the tea-house and two of her maidens received us. We pattered in our stocking feet through a maze of narrow passages running between white paper walls on which every here and there was reflected the fantastic form of a little dancer. We entered the room set aside for our entertainment, and sat us down on velvet cushions on the floor, and the little maidens brought tall white paper lanterns and tea and mandarines, a great *habichi*, and three little smoking-boxes, then we waited. The Japanese are far too artistic a people to hurry, far too artistic to spoil an effect by overcrowding or rush. They make of the commonest duty a ceremony, and of the offering of a cup of tea an entertainment. They are content to look upon one flower at a time, and while the elaborateness of our pleasures bores us, they are delighted with the simplicity of theirs.

The paper door slid back and O Mitsu San entered on her knees followed by three little dancers. They were the

veriest butterflies, those dancers, with their dresses of dark blue and bright patterns, their gold embroidered obis, their great flying sleeves, and their coiffures sparkling with tinsel ornaments. Though they appeared mere children, their grace and pretty assurance were of women three times their age. But to O Mitsu San we lost our hearts. Everything she said was spoken in a gentle interrogative tone, pleasing to us and peculiarly flattering to masculine ears. It is true that when we tried to return her compliments she laughed, but she laughed apologetically, and hid as much of it as she could in her sleeve. When she played on the *samisen* to accompany the little dancers, and when she sang it was a new fascination. When the dancing was over, and the *saki* cup was being passed round, she handed me her little pipe after having taken a puff and refilled it, and I accepted her courtesy as an honour; Taro San was amused, but highly pleased. He told us to confirm our taste that no less than six Japanese ministers had married *geishas*!

But still O Mitsu San is a Japanese maiden of yesterday. She could never compete with the emancipated ladies of the ball-room nor the contingent from America. In his heart I think Taro San prefers the dainty creature in *kimono* and patters, with her single accomplishment of pleasing, to all the wise dames of the West, but his duty to himself and country appears to leave no choice between O Mitsu San and her bowing and laughing, her soft ways and her *samisen*, and the lady in tournure and tall bonnet, with manners as stiff as the one, and attitudes as despairing as the other.

"Good-night, *Sayonara*, O Mitsu San," and from the little figure kneeling on the threshold of the tea-house, out to us as we walked across the rice fields, came an echo *Sayonara—Sayonara*, from old Nippon to Japan.

LOUIS LLOYD.

A SUMMER SONG.

PERCHED on a blossoming twig that gently swayed,
In rhythm to his thrilling lay, a bird
Poured out his heart, in throbs of joyous song;
And this the measure that my heart-strings stirred:
"Oh, summer! may the spring's soft breezes kiss
Thy slumbering eyelids, and new life infuse!
Wake, and shower beauty o'er the green, green earth!
Paint all thy lovely flowers in rainbow hues,
To deck the meadows and the whispering woods!
And from afar, lure all the wandering birds
To chant the praises of thy glowing days,
And sing, sing, sing of beauty beyond words!"

Then made my heart reply: "Oh, bird of joy!
The summer's smiles may glow in beauty bright,
Yet will her flowing tears chill thy heart;
And sudden lightnings of her wrath may smite,
Thy fluttering life; and autumn's breezes keen
Will pale her cheek and wither all her flowers;
And o'er her drooping head the leaves will fall,
Until she fades and dies in leafless bowers."

But undismayed the fearless warbler sang:
"The tears of summer fall, but to revive
Her drooping plants and garlands fair, and should
Her arrows pierce my heart, I still will strive
While life and health remain, to sing in praise
Of all the glory that enriches summer's days!"
Halifax, May, 1889. S. P. M.

HANDEL.

MUSIC and literature are among the great moral forces of the present, and it is of some consequence that we cultivate and encourage the best in both. We have heard it said that the standard of taste—which never was excessively high—is becoming deteriorated; the best books, it is averred, do not pay, and the best music is supposed to be in the like condition, and money being made the measure of all things, managers and publishers naturally cater for the paying multitude. Our daily newspapers generally tend in the same direction, giving us some times columns of minute criminal biography, and the most meagre reports of important moral and Christian councils. We are not supposing that our journals dote on the inmates of penitentiaries and see nothing admirable in our clergy and moral reformers, but simply that the reading newspaper public find an article on criminal wit and audacity much more spicy and interesting than reports of clerical utterances on Christian union, or the moral regeneration of the children of Adam generally, and as it is with the newspaper press largely a matter of dollars and cents, the article which represents the shady side of human nature is served up with appropriate head-lines in the largest type, whilst the more wholesome items receive very modest and moderate mention. Perhaps all this is less significant than we suppose. Some twenty years ago the *London Journal* attempted to bring out "Kenilworth" as a serial, with the result that the circulation of the paper went down so alarmingly, that the story was discontinued to save the publishers from serious loss. Yet we presume it meant nothing more than that a certain class of readers preferred their usual "penny-dreadful" to Scott's most exciting novel—which by the way our grandmothers thought dreadful enough for anything. Nevertheless, the mental food of the million should not be a matter of indifference; a violet does not more surely breathe sweetness than a cesspool emits pestilence, and if our thoughts and words go forth not to die, but to be

inbreathed again by others, certainly grave responsibility rests upon those who speak to this age, whether in the realm of literature or music.

We live by Admiration, Hope and Love,
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.

What a noble lesson for us there is in the life of Handel, who suffered and sacrificed and laboured under difficulties of the most galling kind, because he would at all cost realize his own grand ideal. His life is a striking exemplification of the old motto—"Growth under pressure." His music and his life are one, and equally noble and inspiring. In the early years of his career his work was considered novel and absurd, the musical world of England was against him. Many of the best singers made it their business to ruin him to the extent of their powers, and with the help of the nobility they succeeded in so directing the course of "fashion" that his concerts were deserted. In vain the King and Queen Caroline threw all the weight of their influence into his cause. The Prince of Wales was in violent opposition to the Court, and powerful enough in such a matter to carry the majority with him. The King and Queen sat freezing in almost empty houses drinking in the matchless music of the great composer, Lord Chesterfield excusing his attendance in courtly mockery, as "he did not desire to intrude upon the privacy of his Sovereign." It became a sign of good taste to ridicule Handel's music, famous mimics, comic singers, puppet shows, and card parties were resorted to to draw away those who should have heard him, and strange to say they were successful.

For a time he bore up against the stream, but when, when all his savings were spent bankruptcy barred his way, and for a time closed his career.

"Chill penury," however, did not freeze the genial current of his soul.

Most wretched men are cradled into poetry by wrong
They learn in suffering what they teach in song—

And Handel, bankrupt and deserted, sat down to compose the greatest of his works—The Messiah. Think of this man of pure soul and noble genius rising above all sordid cares at such a moment, into that mighty measure of inspired music. We cannot help turning to Browning's subtle and exquisite lines:

Of the million or two, more or less,
I rule and possess.
One man, for some cause undefined,
Was least to my mind.

When sudden—how think ye, the end?
Did I say "without friend?"
Say rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his target
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe prest!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
So I was afraid!

The really great are not envious of the greatness of others. Haydn exclaimed with enthusiasm, "Handel is the father of us all." Mozart was not less hearty in his love and admiration. "When he chooses," said he, "Handel strikes like the thunder-bolt." Beethoven received him as "the monarch of the musical world," and when he was dying, pointing to Handel's works in forty volumes, he exclaimed, "There—there is the truth."

So strong was the feeling against him in England that he dare not risk the production of this great work in London, but crossing to Ireland he gave it first in Dublin, carrying the Irish capital by storm. He had long battled with adverse fortune and his sensitive nature had felt to the full the bitterness of hostility and the coldness of neglect, but the sunshine of appreciation and prosperity came to him like a breath from heaven, and he knew that he had indeed found his mission and his reward. When twelve months afterwards he gave "The Messiah" in England it was received coldly, the old hostility had not died out, and two more years of labour and battle reduced him again to bankruptcy, then the clouds began to lift and sunshine to visit him, and in a few years Handel's triumph was complete.

The best years of his life had been spent in a hand-to-hand struggle with poverty because he would not descend to the level of his times, but rather set himself to raise the standard of taste to the level of his own noble conceptions.

When eight years before his death he sat at the organ, blind and aged, whilst the choir sang to the pathetic strains of his own music those noble lines in which Milton represents the Jewish hero lamenting the darkness that encompassed him, a thrill of sympathetic emotion passed through the vast audience as they gazed with remorse and wonder and love on that old man eloquent, who had suffered so much for his own grand ideals, and triumphed so grandly.

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon.

D. K. R.

ELSEWHERE will be found the report of the Seventy-first Annual Meeting of the Bank of Montreal held last Monday. It is a clear statement of the position of this, the leading banking institution not only of the Dominion, but of the American continent. We are certain our readers will peruse the address of the President and the remarks of the General Manager with much interest. It is gratifying to know that Mr. Buchanan takes a hopeful view of the outlook for the future.