

valley, or how the water in the numerous rivers gets out, so completely do we appear to be surrounded by mountains.

It would be folly to attempt, in this short sketch, a description of the people and their ways. The idea conveyed by such a picture would be so incomplete as to be quite false. Nothing short of a large volume, or perhaps several volumes, could do the subject justice. Not only in looks and language do they differ from Canadians; but in dress, in ideas, in customs, in superstitions, aye, and in morals also, they are almost diametrically the opposite of what you know at home. Nūjima, who did so much for Japanese Christianity, and who is regarded by Japanese Christians generally as almost a patron saint, used to say that the besetting sins of his countrymen were "lying and licentiousness." The degree to which both are carried is almost incredible. Even an outline of the latter would not be fit for public reading. To call a man a liar is not thought to be at all impolite, even amongst this, the most polite people in the world. This jars strangely on the foreigner just arrived; but he usually passes it over amid the whirl of strange sights and customs. Last August, a friend, a former college colleague, arrived from Canada, and in September began as English and Latin instructor in the *Keio gijiku*, a famous Tokyo school. A few days after the opening of the fall term, this new arrival was going through a course of English conversation with a class, when one of the pupils asked him how old he was. The Canadian tutor told his age, and then well-nigh lost control of himself as the answer came back in a mild voice, "I think you lie. More young."

Perhaps a brief description of a Japanese house is possible, because they are so small and contain so little. It is commonly said that a newly married Japanese pair require only \$5 worth of furniture to begin housekeeping with; but I am sure the lower classes generally begin with much less than this. The things necessary, *i.e.*, what you would call the furniture, are two "futons," or very thick quilts, which can be bought for eighty cents each, but which, by the poorer classes, are almost always rented at so much a day; then a small fire-box (a cheap one for ten cents) for burning charcoal, a few little lacquer bowls, two pairs of chop sticks, and two small earthenware kettles, with a lamp, completes the outfit. And even this lamp is a luxury of late years, and altogether unknown in many country places.

The Japanese houses in well-to-do places—and Nagano is a well-to-do place—are roofed with tile generally, a few with wooden shingles, while most country houses are thatched with straw. Instead of doors, windows, and walls are erected lattice-work frames, usually three feet by six, which are covered with thin white paper, to let in the light; and these slide along

in grooves, where the walls of a Canadian house would stand. Thus by pushing one of these to one side, an exit can be made from any place in the room, in any direction. In another groove outside the paper-covered slides run wooden ones, which are closed at night, and sometimes during rain in the day. When there is a ceiling below the roof, it usually consists of thin boards, lapped one over the other. The floors are covered with thick mats made of rice straw, and always of the same size, *viz.*, six feet by three. Thus the size of a room comes to be designated by the number of mats it contains. Instead of chairs, you sit or squat upon these mats, and it is the height of impropriety to step upon these mats with boots, sandals, or other outside wearing gear on. This is why you must always remove your boots before entering a Japanese house.

My own house contains four rooms for dwelling, in addition to a kind of shed for a kitchen. Two rooms have eight mats each, and two have six each. That is, two rooms are twelve feet square, and two are twelve feet by nine. One room we use for a dining room during the day, and a bedroom at night for our maid-of-all-work. Another is used as a study, another for our bedroom, and the fourth as a kind of reception room for our Japanese guests, who are very many. I almost forgot to mention the little room of three mats before the front entrance, which can have no special use, except as a kind of hall.

The thick quilts which are spread for a bed at night are during the day packed away in a closet. The reason the Japanese have so little furniture is not only because, as a nation, they are poor, but especially because of the great fires which are so frequent in Japan, and which sweep away these frail little houses by the hundred, even to several thousands, at times. The average Japanese tenant makes not the slightest effort to stay the progress of the flames, but packs up his few articles of furniture, lifts them upon his back—or more frequently his wife's—and then when they are deposited at a safe distance sits down and watches the scene behind. Even in a rich man's house one sees scarcely any furniture or decorations. All his costly treasures, curios, paintings, etc., are securely stored away in a fireproof storehouse of mud, built at the rear of the main dwelling.

There is a difference of thirteen hours and three-quarters between Hamilton (Canada) time and that of Nagano, Japan; that is, when you are rising about seven o'clock Sunday morning, and looking forward to the services of the day, it is almost nine o'clock Sunday night with us. So when returning thanks for God's blessing and presence with us in the services in which we have been engaged, we never fail to ask Him to go with you into the holy place, which you are about to enter.