

## The Rockwood Review.

fishing boats of a form peculiar to the locality. They are very large—capable of carrying forty or fifty men each, and they have queer high prows, to which Buddhist or Shinto charms ("manori" or "shugo") is furnished for this purpose from the temple of the Goddess of Fuji. The text reads: "Fuji-san chojo Sengen-gu dai-gyo manzoku," meaning that the owner of the boat pledges himself, in case of good fortune at fishing, to perform great austerities in honor of the divinity whose shrine is upon the summit of Fuji.

In every coast province of Japan—and even at different fishing settlements of the same province—the form of boats and fishing implements are peculiar to the district or settlement. Indeed, it will sometimes be found that settlements, within a few miles of each other, respectively manufacture nets or boats as dissimilar in type as might be the inventions of races living thousands of miles apart. This amazing variety may be in some degree due to respect for local tradition, to the pious conservatism that preserves ancestral teaching and custom unchanged through hundreds of years; but it is better explained by the fact that different communities practice different kinds of fishing, and the shapes of the nets or the boats made at any one place are likely to prove on investigation the inventions of special experience. The big Yaidzu boats illustrate this fact. They were devised according to the particular requirements of the Yaidzu fishing industry, which supplies dried "katsuo" (bonito) to all parts of the Empire, and it was necessary that they should be able to ride a very rough sea. To get them in or out of the water is a heavy job, but the whole village helps. A kind of slipway is improvised in a moment by laying flat wooden frames on the slope in a line, and over these frames the flat-bottomed vessels are hauled up or down by means of long ropes. You will see a hun-

dred or more persons thus engaged in moving a single boat, men, women and children pulling together in time to a curious melancholy chant.

The big boats, with holy texts at their prows, are not the strangest objects on the beach. Even more remarkable are the bait-baskets of split bamboo—baskets six feet high and eighteen feet round, with one small hole in the dome-shaped top. Ranged along the seawall to dry, they might at some distance be mistaken for habitations or huts of some sort. Then you see great wooden anchors, shaped like ploughshares, and shod with metal; iron anchors, with four flukes; prodigious wooden mallets, used for driving stakes and various other implements, still more unfamiliar, of which you cannot even imagine the purpose. The indiscribable antique queer-ness of everything gives you that weird sensation of remoteness—of the far away in time and place—which makes one doubt the reality of the visible. And the life of Yaidzu is certainly the life of many centuries ago. The people, too, are the people of Old Japan; frank and kindly as children—good children—honest to a fault, innocent of the further world, loyal to the ancient traditions and the ancient gods.

I happened to be at Yaidzu during the three days of the "Bon," or Festival of the Dead, and I hoped to see their beautiful farewell ceremony of the third and last day. In many parts of Japan the ghosts are furnished with miniature ships for their voyage—little models of junks or fishing craft, each containing offerings of food and water and kindled incense; also a tiny lantern or lamp, if the ghost-ship be dispatched at night. But at Yaidzu lanterns only are set afloat; and I was told that they would be launched after dark. Midnight being the customary hour elsewhere, I supposed that it was the hour of farewell at Yaidzu also; and I rashly indulged in a