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## *The Use of English in Japan.*

ON the day after my arrival in Tokio in the summer of 1905, I walked out alone through the Akasaka ward to "get my bearings." For one who was a stranger to both language and customs of the country, this was not the part of prudence for the war with Russia was still dragging along. Tokio was suffering from nerves, and the "spy" mania was acute. As I wandered about marvelling at the cleverness of people who in such a vast maze as Tokio, could find their way through such crooked and apparently nameless streets, it suddenly dawned upon me that I was "shadowed." I quickened my pace and heard hurried footsteps behind; I walked more slowly and the pursuer suited his pace to mine. I halted before a shop, and knew that a man was standing a yard behind me. Next, I thought, will come the touch on my arm, the ignominious trip to the police station, the endless explanations in a foreign tongue to unsympathetic officials. Then, just as I had resolved to turn round and have it out with my shadow, it spoke:

"Where are you going?"

The question was in English—in straight-flung words and few, without any of the honorifics or circumlocutions that pad such a speech in Japanese. And with the question the questioner forged alongside. "An official of some kind," I thought, "but surely not hostile," for his smile was bland and his manner conciliatory. He was dressed in blue "service serge" with brass buttoned tunic and trousers a good deal too short. On his head was a flat German cap with a brass badge, and his shoes had the ashen color of Tokio mud.

"Where do you live?" he enquired sweetly, (the first question still unanswered), and I told him as well as I could. "What do you think of Japan?" Of course I was delighted with the country.

"May I call at your house very often? I very much like to talk English with foreign gentlemen."

This was my first encounter with the Tokio student. Then for the first time I realized the strength of his craving for a knowledge of English. This particular one accompanied me to my house and I saw him no more, but I have had many similar experiences with others in the streets, in hotels, on railways, in Tokio and in the remotest parts of the Empire.

There are in Tokio about 300,000 students above the primary grade, and nearly all are hungering and thirsting to learn English. The study of the language is compulsory in all middle schools and a very stiff examination, both writ-