

close this article with a few words about the "Peerless Mountain" which so profoundly influences the poetry, the plastic art and even the religion of those laughing children of the sun, the people of Nippon. They are pleased to believe that at a date equivalent to our 286 B.C. an earthquake by one effort produced the two most beautiful things in the world, Lake Biwa and Fujisan or Fujiyama. As we can readily see these two objects were ever in the mind both of Hokusai and of Hiroshige, and no one can even glance at a collection of objects of Japanese art without seeing that exquisitely simple cone, with its gleaming snow cap, always isolated and remote; and if we look a little more closely we can hardly escape seeing the beautiful lake with the wild geese flying over it, or the sail boats moving on its surface, or the rain, or the moonlight, or avoid fancying that we can hear the bells of the temples sounding across the lake at eventide. Among the countless prints by Hiroshige few are so beautiful as the eight landscapes of Omi, the province in which Lake Biwa is situated. In the earlier work by Hokusai the "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji" are the most important. There are as a matter of fact forty-six views in the set, of which I am glad to own twenty-six. From these prints one learns that all there is of life and Nature centres round Fujiyama, or at least that life is in no case complete without the peerless mountain. Elsewhere you may find him at the bottom of a sake cup or a tea bowl, or he may be blessing the handle of a teapot, his silver form embedded in the bronze, or he may be a tiny image in gold or silver laid into the steel of some sword, or he may shine through the windows in one of Harunobu's love scenes, but to Hokusai he is the sentinel who watches over every aspect of life. In some of his prints, perhaps, we are close to Fuji, and the red mountain in fine weather towers against a deep blue sky, or a storm is raging and the lightning plays round its base; in another across the sea in the huge waves of