

"ri," and he tells you it is. You know it cannot be both, and lean back in your chair with a deep sigh. As a matter of fact it isn't either. It is a kind of cross between "di" and "ri" (continental pronunciation), but the teacher has despaired of ever being able to bring your stupid ear and tongue to acquire the exact sound. And then, in turn, you try several other syllables, each of which has no corresponding sound in English, and at each succeeding one your headache seems to increase, and, shall I add, also your heart-ache. By the way, the selection of a good teacher is of great importance. You yourself are not at first capable of distinguishing between good and bad, and must get some friend or fellow-missionary with more experience to procure one for you. Not only should he be distinguished for his slow and distinct articulation, his knowledge of his country's language, and his ability to teach it, but especially for the quality of his language. For the provincialisms of the different English and Scotch counties are a mere circumstance to what is to be found in Japan. Here not only districts and counties differ in their accent, pronunciation, and in many names of things, but towns and villages, ten and even six miles apart, will, in many instances, have each its own peculiar brogue. Often one comes across amusing examples of this. A short time ago, our "hired help" (that is the proper term in America, is it not?) consisted of a nurse and a maid of all-work. They came from adjoining counties, and like domestics generally, in their spare moments, enjoyed an exchange of gossip in the kitchen. Only a thin sliding paper partition separated the kitchen from our little parlor, and if you were in our room it was impossible to escape overhearing everything said in the other. The maid would sometimes begin a story, and perhaps before she had finished the second sentence the nurse would interrupt her with "Nan da?" (What is it?). The sentence would be repeated, and again would come from the nurse "Nan da?" A second repetition would probably be followed by the nurse asking, "Nihon kotoba?" (Is it the Japanese language you are speaking?) The maid at this would laugh good naturedly, and set out on some round about way to explain her meaning, at the end of which the mystified nurse would perhaps be more at sea than before. This great difference in dialect is largely accounted for by the common people, until less than thirty years ago, living for successive generations in the same town or village, and never being allowed to leave it or visit any other place without permission from the *daimyo*, or feudal lord, a permission rarely asked for, and still more rarely obtained. However, to day the dialect of the upper and middle classes in Tokyo is regarded as the standard, and is generally understood, except in the most remote districts.

Three hundred years ago all Englishmen of learning read and wrote Latin, and in conversation spoke English. So far as reading and speaking are concerned, something similar exists in Japan to-day. The language of books does not indeed differ quite so much from the colloquial as Latin from English, but, on the other hand, our ancestors three centuries back were not troubled with a special "correspondence department." This, although it may be a benefit to the modern newspaper, is only another burden to the student of modern Japanese. You may have acquired the ability of speaking Japanese fluently, and reading a Japanese book with ease, and yet not be able to read or write a word of an ordinary Japanese letter, nor understand when you hear some one else read it. There is a flowing style in which the Chinese characters are written, but when so written very few appear to bear any resemblance to the same characters when printed. Not only so, but there is a special style or form of speech and a special set of words used in correspondence. While there are several thousands of Japanese who can write an English letter, with mistakes, it is true, but still so as to be understood by an ordinary English scholar, I have never heard of a foreigner who could write a Japanese letter, with the usual flowing style of Chinese character.

There is no need to go further in order to prove that Japanese is somewhat difficult to learn. No need to mention that there is a Court language in Japan, used in and around the Imperial household, which is so much Greek to the ordinary Japanese. There is also a set of words in common use among soldiers, and officials, and students, a still larger set which must be used by women, and by them only. One does not realize how much the European languages have in common, both as to order of speech, idea, and actual words, until he begins to study Japanese, and finds that in all these respects the language of the "England of the East" is as far as possible removed, not only from that of the England of the West, but also from that of every other country in Europe. Pronouns are little used in Japanese. Two may be engaged in conversation for three hours, and during the whole time use no word corresponding to our "you" or "I." Their function is performed by a set of honorifics or complimentary terms used where an English speaker would say "you," and by a set of contemptuous terms used where we should say "I." "The honorable house, cane, dog," etc., means "your house, cane, and dog," while "the stupid wife," "the dirty child," "the unbearable house," etc., all belong to me. And this not only with nouns, but with verbs also, of which a certain number have come to have a complimentary or adulating sense, and others the reverse. Basil Hall Chamberlain, Professor of Philology in the