

***ISABELLA
L. BIRD***

The background of the cover is a photograph of a traditional Japanese pagoda, likely the Daibutsuten in Kyoto, silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a soft purple at the top. Several birds are captured in flight, scattered across the right side of the frame. The pagoda's structure is clearly visible, including its multiple eaves and the tall, spire-like stupa on top.

***UNBEATEN
TRACKS
IN JAPAN***

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Isabella L. Bird

Unbeaten Tracks in Japan

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PREFACE

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HAVING been recommended to leave home, in April 1878, in order to recruit my health by means which had proved serviceable before, I decided to visit Japan, attracted less by the reputed excellence of its climate than by the certainty that it possessed, in an especial degree, those sources of novel and sustained interest which conduce so essentially to the enjoyment and restoration of a solitary health-seeker. The climate disappointed me, but, though I found the country a study rather than a rapture, its interest exceeded my largest expectations.

This is not a "Book on Japan," but a narrative of travels in Japan, and an attempt to contribute something to the sum of knowledge of the present condition of the country, and it was not till I had travelled for some months in the interior of the main island and in Yezo that I decided that my materials were novel enough to render the contribution worth making. From Nikkô northwards my route was altogether off the beaten track, and had never been traversed in its entirety by any European. I lived among the Japanese, and saw their mode of living, in regions unaffected by European contact. As a lady travelling alone, and the first European lady who had been seen in several districts through which my route lay, my experiences differed more or less widely from those of preceding travellers; and I am able to offer a fuller account of the aborigines of Yezo, obtained by actual acquaintance with them, than has hitherto been given.

These are my chief reasons for offering this volume to the public.

It was with some reluctance that I decided that it should consist mainly of letters written on the spot to my sister and a circle of personal friends, for this form of publication involves the sacrifice of artistic arrangement and literary treatment, and necessitates a certain amount of egotism; but, on the other hand, it places the reader in the position of the traveller, and makes him share the vicissitudes of travel, discomfort, difficulty, and tedium, as well as novelty and enjoyment. The "beaten tracks," with the exception of Nikkô, have been dismissed in a few sentences, but where their features have undergone marked changes within a few years, as in the case of Tôkiyô (Yedo), they have been sketched more or less slightly. Many important subjects are necessarily passed over.

In Northern Japan, in the absence of all other sources of information, I had to learn everything from the people themselves, through an interpreter, and every fact had to be disinterred by careful labour from amidst a mass of rubbish. The Ainos supplied the information which is given concerning their customs, habits, and religion; but I had an opportunity of comparing my notes with some taken about the same time by Mr. Heinrich Von Siebold of the Austrian Legation, and of finding a most satisfactory agreement on all points.

Some of the Letters give a less pleasing picture of the condition of the peasantry than the one popularly presented, and it is possible that some readers may wish that it had been less realistically painted; but as the scenes

are strictly representative, and I neither made them nor went in search of them, I offer them in the interests of truth, for they illustrate the nature of a large portion of the material with which the Japanese Government has to work in building up the New Civilisation.

Accuracy has been my first aim, but the sources of error are many, and it is from those who have studied Japan the most carefully, and are the best acquainted with its difficulties, that I shall receive the most kindly allowance if, in spite of carefulness, I have fallen into mistakes.

The Transactions of the English and German Asiatic Societies of Japan, and papers on special Japanese subjects, including "A Budget of Japanese Notes," in the *Japan Mail* and *Tôkiyô Times*, gave me valuable help; and I gratefully acknowledge the assistance afforded me in many ways by Sir Harry S. Parkes, K.C.B., and Mr. Satow of H.B.M.'s Legation, Principal Dyer, Mr. Chamberlain of the Imperial Naval College, Mr. F. V. Dickins, and others, whose kindly interest in my work often encouraged me when I was disheartened by my lack of skill; but, in justice to these and other kind friends, I am anxious to claim and accept the fullest measure of personal responsibility for the opinions expressed, which, whether right or wrong, are wholly my own.

The illustrations, with the exception of three, which are by a Japanese artist, have been engraved from sketches of my own or Japanese photographs.

I am painfully conscious of the defects of this volume, but I venture to present it to the public in the hope that, in spite of its demerits, it may be accepted as an honest attempt to

describe things as I saw them in Japan, on land journeys of more than 1400 miles.

Since the letters passed through the press, the beloved and only sister to whom, in the first instance, they were written, to whose able and careful criticism they owe much, and whose loving interest was the inspiration alike of my travels and of my narratives of them, has passed away.

ISABELLA L. BIRD.

LETTER I.

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First View of Japan—A Vision of Fujisan—Japanese Sampans—"Pullman Cars"—Undignified Locomotion—Paper Money—The Drawbacks of Japanese Travelling.

ORIENTAL HOTEL, YOKOHAMA,
May 21.

EIGHTEEN days of unintermitted rolling over "desolate rainy seas" brought the "City of Tokio" early yesterday morning to Cape King, and by noon we were steaming up the Gulf of Yedo, quite near the shore. The day was soft and grey with a little faint blue sky, and, though the coast of Japan is much more prepossessing than most coasts, there were no startling surprises either of colour or form. Broken wooded ridges, deeply cleft, rise from the water's edge, gray, deep-roofed villages cluster about the mouths of the ravines, and terraces of rice cultivation, bright with the greenness of English lawns, run up to a great height among dark masses of upland forest. The populousness of the coast is very impressive, and the gulf everywhere was equally peopled with fishing-boats, of which we passed not only hundreds,

but thousands, in five hours. The coast and sea were pale, and the boats were pale too, their hulls being unpainted wood, and their sails pure white duck. Now and then a high-sterned junk drifted by like a phantom galley, then we slackened speed to avoid exterminating a fleet of triangular-looking fishing-boats with white square sails, and so on through the grayness and dumbness hour after hour.

For long I looked in vain for Fujisan, and failed to see it, though I heard ecstasies all over the deck, till, accidentally looking heavenwards instead of earthwards, I saw far above any possibility of height, as one would have thought, a huge, truncated cone of pure snow, 13,080 feet above the sea, from which it sweeps upwards in a glorious curve, very wan, against a very pale blue sky, with its base and the intervening country veiled in a pale grey mist. [2] It was a wonderful vision, and shortly, as a vision, vanished. Except the cone of Tristan d'Acunha—also a cone of snow—I never saw a mountain rise in such lonely majesty, with nothing near or far to detract from its height and grandeur. No wonder that it is a sacred mountain, and so dear to the Japanese that their art is never weary of representing it. It was nearly fifty miles off when we first saw it.

The air and water were alike motionless, the mist was still and pale, grey clouds lay restfully on a bluish sky, the reflections of the white sails of the fishing-boats scarcely quivered; it was all so pale, wan, and ghastly, that the turbulence of crumpled foam which we left behind us, and our noisy, throbbing progress, seemed a boisterous intrusion upon sleeping Asia.



The gulf narrowed, the forest-crested hills, the terraced ravines, the picturesque grey villages, the quiet beach life, and the pale blue masses of the mountains of the interior, became more visible. Fuji retired into the mist in which he enfolds his grandeur for most of the summer; we passed Reception Bay, Perry Island, Webster Island, Cape Saratoga, and Mississippi Bay—American nomenclature which perpetuates the successes of American diplomacy—and not far from Treaty Point came upon a red lightship with the words “Treaty Point” in large letters upon her. Outside of this no foreign vessel may anchor.

The bustle among my fellow-passengers, many of whom were returning home, and all of whom expected to be met by friends, left me at leisure, as I looked at unattractive, unfamiliar Yokohama and the pale grey land stretched out before me, to speculate somewhat sadly on my destiny on these strange shores, on which I have not even an

acquaintance. On mooring we were at once surrounded by crowds of native boats called by foreigners *sampans*, and Dr. Gulick, a near relation of my Hilo friends, came on board to meet his daughter, welcomed me cordially, and relieved me of all the trouble of disembarkation. These *sampans* are very clumsy-looking, but are managed with great dexterity by the boatmen, who gave and received any number of bumps with much good nature, and without any of the shouting and swearing in which competitive boatmen usually indulge.

The partially triangular shape of these boats approaches that of a salmon-fisher's punt used on certain British rivers. Being floored gives them the appearance of being absolutely flat-bottomed; but, though they tilt readily, they are very safe, being heavily built and fitted together with singular precision with wooden bolts and a few copper cleets. They are *sculled*, not what we should call rowed, by two or four men with very heavy oars made of two pieces of wood working on pins placed on outrigger bars. The men scull standing and use the thigh as a rest for the oar. They all wear a single, wide-sleeved, scanty, blue cotton garment, not fastened or girdled at the waist, straw sandals, kept on by a thong passing between the great toe and the others, and if they wear any head-gear, it is only a wisp of blue cotton tied round the forehead. The one garment is only an apology for clothing, and displays lean concave chests and lean muscular limbs. The skin is very yellow, and often much tattooed with mythical beasts. The charge for *sampans* is fixed by tariff, so the traveller lands without having his temper ruffled by extortionate demands.

The first thing that impressed me on landing was that there were no loafers, and that all the small, ugly, kindly-looking, shrivelled, bandy-legged, round-shouldered, concave-chested, poor-looking beings in the streets had some affairs of their own to mind. At the top of the landing-steps there was a portable restaurant, a neat and most compact thing, with charcoal stove, cooking and eating utensils complete; but it looked as if it were made by and for dolls, and the mannikin who kept it was not five feet high. At the custom-house we were attended to by minute officials in blue uniforms of European pattern and leather boots; very civil creatures, who opened and examined our trunks carefully, and strapped them up again, contrasting pleasingly with the insolent and rapacious officials who perform the same duties at New York.

Outside were about fifty of the now well-known *jintikishas*, and the air was full of a buzz produced by the rapid reiteration of this uncouth word by fifty tongues. This conveyance, as you know, is a feature of Japan, growing in importance every day. It was only invented seven years ago, and already there are nearly 23,000 in one city, and men can make so much more by drawing them than by almost any kind of skilled labour, that thousands of fine young men desert agricultural pursuits and flock into the towns to make draught-animals of themselves, though it is said that the average duration of a man's life after he takes to running is only five years, and that the runners fall victims in large numbers to aggravated forms of heart and lung disease. Over tolerably level ground a good runner can trot forty miles a day, at a rate of about four miles an hour. They are

registered and taxed at 8s. a year for one carrying two persons, and 4s. for one which carries one only, and there is a regular tariff for time and distance.



The *kuruma*, or jin-ri-ki-sha, [5] consists of a light perambulator body, an adjustable hood of oiled paper, a velvet or cloth lining and cushion, a well for parcels under the seat, two high slim wheels, and a pair of shafts connected by a bar at the ends. The body is usually lacquered and decorated according to its owner's taste. Some show little except polished brass, others are altogether inlaid with shells known as Venus's ear, and others are gaudily painted with contorted dragons, or groups of peonies, hydrangeas, chrysanthemums, and mythical personages. They cost from £2 upwards. The shafts rest on the ground at a steep incline as you get in—it must require much practice to enable one to mount with ease or dignity—the runner lifts them up, gets into them,

gives the body a good tilt backwards, and goes off at a smart trot. They are drawn by one, two, or three men, according to the speed desired by the occupants. When rain comes on, the man puts up the hood, and ties you and it closely up in a covering of oiled paper, in which you are invisible. At night, whether running or standing still, they carry prettily-painted circular paper lanterns 18 inches long. It is most comical to see stout, florid, solid-looking merchants, missionaries, male and female, fashionably-dressed ladies, armed with card cases, Chinese compradores, and Japanese peasant men and women flying along Main Street, which is like the decent respectable High Street of a dozen forgotten country towns in England, in happy unconsciousness of the ludicrousness of their appearance; racing, chasing, crossing each other, their lean, polite, pleasant runners in their great hats shaped like inverted bowls, their incomprehensible blue tights, and their short blue over-shirts with badges or characters in white upon them, tearing along, their yellow faces streaming with perspiration, laughing, shouting, and avoiding collisions by a mere shave.

After a visit to the Consulate I entered a *kuruma* and, with two ladies in two more, was bowled along at a furious pace by a laughing little mannikin down Main Street—a narrow, solid, well-paved street with well-made side walks, kerb-stones, and gutters, with iron lamp-posts, gas-lamps, and foreign shops all along its length—to this quiet hotel recommended by Sir Wyville Thomson, which offers a refuge from the nasal twang of my fellow-voyagers, who have all gone to the caravanserais on the Bund. The host is a

Frenchman, but he relies on a Chinaman; the servants are Japanese “boys” in Japanese clothes; and there is a Japanese “groom of the chambers” in faultless English costume, who perfectly appals me by the elaborate politeness of his manner.

Almost as soon as I arrived I was obliged to go in search of Mr. Fraser’s office in the settlement; I say *search*, for there are no names on the streets; where there are numbers they have no sequence, and I met no Europeans on foot to help me in my difficulty. Yokohama does not improve on further acquaintance. It has a dead-alive look. It has irregularity without picturesqueness, and the grey sky, grey sea, grey houses, and grey roofs, look harmoniously dull. No foreign money except the Mexican dollar passes in Japan, and Mr. Fraser’s compradore soon metamorphosed my English gold into Japanese *satsu* or paper money, a bundle of yen nearly at par just now with the dollar, packets of 50, 20, and 10 sen notes, and some rouleaux of very neat copper coins. The initiated recognise the different denominations of paper money at a glance by their differing colours and sizes, but at present they are a distracting mystery to me. The notes are pieces of stiff paper with Chinese characters at the corners, near which, with exceptionally good eyes or a magnifying glass, one can discern an English word denoting the value. They are very neatly executed, and are ornamented with the chrysanthemum crest of the Mikado and the interlaced dragons of the Empire.

I long to get away into real Japan. Mr. Wilkinson, H.B.M.’s acting consul, called yesterday, and was extremely kind. He

thinks that my plan for travelling in the interior is rather too ambitious, but that it is perfectly safe for a lady to travel alone, and agrees with everybody else in thinking that legions of fleas and the miserable horses are the great drawbacks of Japanese travelling.

I. L. B.

LETTER II.

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Sir Harry Parkes—An “Ambassador’s Carriage”—Cart Coolies.

YOKOHAMA, *May 22.*

TO-DAY has been spent in making new acquaintances, instituting a search for a servant and a pony, receiving many offers of help, asking questions and receiving from different people answers which directly contradict each other. Hours are early. Thirteen people called on me before noon. Ladies drive themselves about the town in small pony carriages attended by running grooms called *bettos*. The foreign merchants keep *kurumas* constantly standing at their doors, finding a willing, intelligent coolie much more serviceable than a lazy, fractious, capricious Japanese pony, and even the dignity of an “Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary” is not above such a lowly conveyance, as I have seen to-day. My last visitors were Sir Harry and Lady Parkes, who brought sunshine and kindness into the room, and left it behind them. Sir Harry is a young-looking man scarcely in middle life, slight, active, fair, blue-eyed, a thorough Saxon, with sunny hair and a sunny smile, a sunshiny geniality in his manner, and bearing no trace in

his appearance of his thirty years of service in the East, his sufferings in the prison at Peking, and the various attempts upon his life in Japan. He and Lady Parkes were most truly kind, and encourage me so heartily in my largest projects for travelling in the interior, that I shall start as soon as I have secured a servant. When they went away they jumped into *kurumas*, and it was most amusing to see the representative of England hurried down the street in a perambulator with a tandem of coolies.

As I look out of the window I see heavy, two-wheeled man-carts drawn and pushed by four men each, on which nearly all goods, stones for building, and all else, are carried. The two men who pull press with hands and thighs against a cross-bar at the end of a heavy pole, and the two who push apply their shoulders to beams which project behind, using their thick, smoothly-shaven skulls as the motive power when they push their heavy loads uphill. Their cry is impressive and melancholy. They draw incredible loads, but, as if the toil which often makes every breath a groan or a gasp were not enough, they shout incessantly with a coarse, guttural grunt, something like *Ha huida, Ho huida, wa ho, Ha huida, etc.*

I. L. B.



LETTER III.

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Yedo and Tôkiyô—The Yokohama Railroad—The Effect of Misfits—The Plain of Yedo—Personal Peculiarities—First Impressions of Tôkiyô—H. B. M.'s Legation—An English Home.

H.B.M.'S LEGATION, YEDO, *May 24.*

I HAVE dated my letter Yedo, according to the usage of the British Legation, but popularly the new name of Tôkiyô, or Eastern Capital, is used, Kiyôto, the Mikado's former residence, having received the name of Saikiô, or Western Capital, though it has now no claim to be regarded as a capital at all. Yedo belongs to the old régime and the Shôgunate, Tôkiyô to the new régime and the Restoration, with their history of ten years. It would seem an incongruity to travel to *Yedo* by railway, but quite proper when the destination is Tôkiyô.

The journey between the two cities is performed in an hour by an admirable, well-metalled, double-track railroad, 18 miles long, with iron bridges, neat stations, and substantial roomy termini, built by English engineers at a cost known only to Government, and opened by the Mikado in 1872. The Yokohama station is a handsome and suitable stone building, with a spacious approach, ticket-offices on our plan, roomy waiting-rooms for different classes—uncarpeted, however, in consideration of Japanese clogs—and supplied with the daily papers. There is a department for the weighing and labelling of luggage, and on the broad, covered, stone platform at both termini a barrier with

turnstiles, through which, except by special favour, no ticketless person can pass. Except the ticket-clerks, who are Chinese, and the guards and engine-drivers, who are English, the officials are Japanese in European dress. Outside the stations, instead of cabs, there are *kurumas*, which carry luggage as well as people. Only luggage in the hand is allowed to go free; the rest is weighed, numbered, and charged for, a corresponding number being given to its owner to present at his destination. The fares are—3d class, an *ichibu*, or about 1s.; 2d class, 60 *sen*, or about 2s. 4d.; and 1st class, a *yen*, or about 3s. 8d. The tickets are collected as the passengers pass through the barrier at the end of the journey. The English-built cars differ from ours in having seats along the sides, and doors opening on platforms at both ends. On the whole, the arrangements are Continental rather than British. The first-class cars are expensively fitted up with deeply-cushioned, red morocco seats, but carry very few passengers, and the comfortable seats, covered with fine matting, of the 2d class are very scantily occupied; but the 3d class vans are crowded with Japanese, who have taken to railroads as readily as to *kurumas*. This line earns about \$8,000,000 a year.

The Japanese look most diminutive in European dress. Each garment is a misfit, and exaggerates the miserable *physique* and the national defects of concave chests and bow legs. The lack of “complexion” and of hair upon the face makes it nearly impossible to judge of the ages of men. I supposed that all the railroad officials were striplings of 17 or 18, but they are men from 25 to 40 years old.

It was a beautiful day, like an English June day, but hotter, and though the *Sakura* (wild cherry) and its kin, which are the glory of the Japanese spring, are over, everything is a young, fresh green yet, and in all the beauty of growth and luxuriance. The immediate neighbourhood of Yokohama is beautiful, with abrupt wooded hills, and small picturesque valleys; but after passing Kanagawa the railroad enters upon the immense plain of Yedo, said to be 90 miles from north to south, on whose northern and western boundaries faint blue mountains of great height hovered dreamily in the blue haze, and on whose eastern shore for many miles the clear blue wavelets of the Gulf of Yedo ripple, always as then, brightened by the white sails of innumerable fishing-boats. On this fertile and fruitful plain stand not only the capital, with its million of inhabitants, but a number of populous cities, and several hundred thriving agricultural villages. Every foot of land which can be seen from the railroad is cultivated by the most careful spade husbandry, and much of it is irrigated for rice. Streams abound, and villages of grey wooden houses with grey thatch, and grey temples with strangely curved roofs, are scattered thickly over the landscape. It is all homelike, liveable, and pretty, the country of an industrious people, for not a weed is to be seen, but no very striking features or peculiarities arrest one at first sight, unless it be the crowds everywhere.

You don't take your ticket for Tôkiyô, but for Shinagawa or Shinbashi, two of the many villages which have grown together into the capital. Yedo is hardly seen before Shinagawa is reached, for it has no smoke and no long

chimneys; its temples and public buildings are seldom lofty; the former are often concealed among thick trees, and its ordinary houses seldom reach a height of 20 feet. On the right a blue sea with fortified islands upon it, wooded gardens with massive retaining walls, hundreds of fishing-boats lying in creeks or drawn up on the beach; on the left a broad road on which *kurumas* are hurrying both ways, rows of low, grey houses, mostly tea-houses and shops; and as I was asking "Where is Yedo?" the train came to rest in the terminus, the Shinbashi railroad station, and disgorged its 200 Japanese passengers with a combined clatter of 400 clogs—a new sound to me. These clogs add three inches to their height, but even with them few of the men attained 5 feet 7 inches, and few of the women 5 feet 2 inches; but they look far broader in the national costume, which also conceals the defects of their figures. So lean, so yellow, so ugly, yet so pleasant-looking, so wanting in colour and effectiveness; the women so very small and tottering in their walk; the children so formal-looking and such dignified burlesques on the adults, I feel as if I had seen them all before, so like are they to their pictures on trays, fans, and tea-pots. The hair of the women is all drawn away from their faces, and is worn in chignons, and the men, when they don't shave the front of their heads and gather their back hair into a quaint queue drawn forward over the shaven patch, wear their coarse hair about three inches long in a refractory undivided mop.

Davies, an orderly from the Legation, met me,—one of the escort cut down and severely wounded when Sir H. Parkes was attacked in the street of Kiyôto in March 1868 on

his way to his first audience of the Mikado. Hundreds of *kurumas*, and covered carts with four wheels drawn by one miserable horse, which are the omnibuses of certain districts of Tôkiyô, were waiting outside the station, and an English brougham for me, with a running *betto*. The Legation stands in Kôjimachi on very elevated ground above the inner moat of the historic "Castle of Yedo," but I cannot tell you anything of what I saw on my way thither, except that there were miles of dark, silent, barrack-like buildings, with highly ornamental gateways, and long rows of projecting windows with screens made of reeds—the feudal mansions of Yedo—and miles of moats with lofty grass embankments or walls of massive masonry 50 feet high, with kiosk-like towers at the corners, and curious, roofed gateways, and many bridges, and acres of lotus leaves. Turning along the inner moat, up a steep slope, there are, on the right, its deep green waters, the great grass embankment surmounted by a dismal wall overhung by the branches of coniferous trees which surrounded the palace of the Shôgun, and on the left sundry *yashikis*, as the mansions of the *daimiyô* were called, now in this quarter mostly turned into hospitals, barracks, and Government offices. On a height, the most conspicuous of them all, is the great red gateway of the *yashiki*, now occupied by the French Military Mission, formerly the residence of Ii Kamon no Kami, one of the great actors in recent historic events, who was assassinated not far off, outside the Sakaruda gate of the castle. Besides these, barracks, parade-grounds, policemen, *kurumas*, carts pulled and pushed by coolies, pack-horses in straw sandals, and dwarfish, slatternly-

looking soldiers in European dress, made up the Tôkiyô that I saw between Shinbashi and the Legation.

H.B.M.'s Legation has a good situation near the Foreign Office, several of the Government departments, and the residences of the ministers, which are chiefly of brick in the English suburban villa style. Within the compound, with a brick archway with the Royal Arms upon it for an entrance, are the Minister's residence, the Chancery, two houses for the two English Secretaries of Legation, and quarters for the escort.

It is an English house and an English home, though, with the exception of a venerable nurse, there are no English servants. The butler and footman are tall Chinamen, with long pig-tails, black satin caps, and long blue robes; the cook is a Chinaman, and the other servants are all Japanese, including one female servant, a sweet, gentle, kindly girl about 4 feet 5 in height, the wife of the head "housemaid." None of the servants speak anything but the most aggravating "pidgun" English, but their deficient speech is more than made up for by the intelligence and service of the orderly in waiting, who is rarely absent from the neighbourhood of the hall door, and attends to the visitors' book and to all messages and notes. There are two real English children of six and seven, with great capacities for such innocent enjoyments as can be found within the limits of the nursery and garden. The other inmate of the house is a beautiful and attractive terrier called "Rags," a Skye dog, who unbends "in the bosom of his family," but ordinarily is as imposing in his demeanour as if he, and not his master, represented the dignity of the British Empire.

The Japanese Secretary of Legation is Mr. Ernest Satow, whose reputation for scholarship, especially in the department of history, is said by the Japanese themselves to be the highest in Japan [14]—an honourable distinction for an Englishman, and won by the persevering industry of fifteen years. The scholarship connected with the British Civil Service is not, however, monopolised by Mr. Satow, for several gentlemen in the consular service, who are passing through the various grades of student interpreters, are distinguishing themselves not alone by their facility in colloquial Japanese, but by their researches in various departments of Japanese history, mythology, archæology, and literature. Indeed it is to their labours, and to those of a few other Englishmen and Germans, that the Japanese of the rising generation will be indebted for keeping alive not only the knowledge of their archaic literature, but even of the manners and customs of the first half of this century.

I. L. B.

LETTER IV.

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“John Chinaman”—Engaging a Servant—First Impressions of Ito—A Solemn Contract—The Food Question.

H.B.M.’S LEGATION, YEDO,

June 7.

I WENT to Yokohama for a week to visit Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn on the Bluff. Bishop and Mrs. Burdon of Hong Kong were also guests, and it was very pleasant.

One cannot be a day in Yokohama without seeing quite a different class of orientals from the small, thinly-dressed,

and usually poor-looking Japanese. Of the 2500 Chinamen who reside in Japan, over 1100 are in Yokohama, and if they were suddenly removed, business would come to an abrupt halt. Here, as everywhere, the Chinese immigrant is making himself indispensable. He walks through the streets with his swinging gait and air of complete self-complacency, as though he belonged to the ruling race. He is tall and big, and his many garments, with a handsome brocaded robe over all, his satin pantaloons, of which not much is seen, tight at the ankles, and his high shoes, whose black satin tops are slightly turned up at the toes, make him look even taller and bigger than he is. His head is mostly shaven, but the hair at the back is plaited with a quantity of black purple twist into a queue which reaches to his knees, above which, set well back, he wears a stiff, black satin skull-cap, without which he is never seen. His face is very yellow, his long dark eyes and eyebrows slope upwards towards his temples, he has not the vestige of a beard, and his skin is shiny. He looks thoroughly "well-to-do." He is not unpleasing-looking, but you feel that as a Celestial he looks down upon you. If you ask a question in a merchant's office, or change your gold into *satsu*, or take your railroad or steamer ticket, or get change in a shop, the inevitable Chinaman appears. In the street he swings past you with a purpose in his face; as he flies past you in a *kuruma* he is bent on business; he is sober and reliable, and is content to "squeeze" his employer rather than to rob him—his one aim in life is money. For this he is industrious, faithful, self-denying; and he has his reward.

Several of my kind new acquaintances interested themselves about the (to me) vital matter of a servant interpreter, and many Japanese came to "see after the place." The speaking of intelligible English is a *sine qua non*, and it was wonderful to find the few words badly pronounced and worse put together, which were regarded by the candidates as a sufficient qualification. Can you speak English? "Yes." What wages do you ask? "Twelve dollars a month." This was always said glibly, and in each case sounded hopeful. Whom have you lived with? A foreign name distorted out of all recognition, as was natural, was then given. Where have you travelled? This question usually had to be translated into Japanese, and the usual answer was, "The Tokaido, the Nakasendo, to Kiyôto, to Nikkô," naming the beaten tracks of countless tourists. Do you know anything of Northern Japan and the Hokkaido? "No," with a blank wondering look. At this stage in every case Dr. Hepburn compassionately stepped in as interpreter, for their stock of English was exhausted. Three were regarded as promising. One was a sprightly youth who came in a well-made European suit of light-coloured tweed, a laid-down collar, a tie with a diamond (?) pin, and a white shirt, so stiffly starched, that he could hardly bend low enough for a bow even of European profundity. He wore a gilt watch-chain with a locket, the corner of a very white cambric pocket-handkerchief dangled from his breast pocket, and he held a cane and a felt hat in his hand. He was a Japanese dandy of the first water. I looked at him ruefully. To me starched collars are to be an unknown luxury for the next three months. His fine foreign clothes would enhance prices

everywhere in the interior, and besides that, I should feel a perpetual difficulty in asking menial services from an exquisite. I was therefore quite relieved when his English broke down at the second question.

The second was a most respectable-looking man of thirty-five in a good Japanese dress. He was highly recommended, and his first English words were promising, but he had been cook in the service of a wealthy English official who travelled with a large retinue, and sent servants on ahead to prepare the way. He knew really only a few words of English, and his horror at finding that there was "no master," and that there would be no woman-servant, was so great, that I hardly know whether he rejected me or I him.

The third, sent by Mr. Wilkinson, wore a plain Japanese dress, and had a frank, intelligent face. Though Dr. Hepburn spoke with him in Japanese, he thought that he knew more English than the others, and that what he knew would come out when he was less agitated. He evidently understood what I said, and, though I had a suspicion that he would turn out to be the "master," I thought him so prepossessing that I nearly engaged him on the spot. None of the others merit any remark.

However, when I had nearly made up my mind in his favour, a creature appeared without any recommendation at all, except that one of Dr. Hepburn's servants was acquainted with him. He is only eighteen, but this is equivalent to twenty-three or twenty-four with us, and only 4 feet 10 inches in height, but, though bandy-legged, is well proportioned and strong-looking. He has a round and singularly plain face, good teeth, much elongated eyes, and