

## PLANTING THISTLES.

A country does not await news from the bed-side of Roosevelt's son, because he is Roosevelt's son, but because the country looks into the Roosevelt home and sees sorrow there. For the same reason that any indiscretion, any departure from the established rules of strict propriety, on the part of any member of the president's family, is quickly noted and strongly resented; and, on the other hand, any commendable act, on their part is as quickly brought to public attention, so when trouble stalks across the threshold, it stands under the lime-light, and within the nation's line of vision, for the nation belongs to the Roosevelt family, even as the Roosevelt family belongs to the nation.

You who envy the sufferer at Groton the sympathy of this great-hearted people, and cry out that your own son may sicken and die, and the world move as it did before, should reflect that you are not the president, consequently your home is not the headquarters of a loyal people's love.

Do not uproot love to plant envy, but rather say, with the illustrious Lincoln: "Die when I may, I want it said of me, by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower, when I thought a flower would grow."

## SIDE LIGHT ON JAPAN.

Editor The Conservative:

I have now been in Japan three months, and I can give my impressions of the country and the people in a somewhat superficial manner. The country is charming and abounds in beautiful scenery. The last day of our voyage hither, in October, we were all day steaming along the coast, and so near to the land as to see plainly the hills and valleys, the fields and scattered houses, and the high bluffs and impressive mountains. The celebrated Fujiyama, greatest mountain of Japan, at first almost like a towering cloud, and finally revealed itself in all its grandeur, outlined against the sky, as we arrived in the evening at Yokohama. It is natural that the Japanese artists have excelled in landscape-painting when such scenery is continually before their eyes.

A great disenchantment takes place when the traveler lands, and is confronted with the small, dingy houses of unpainted wood, the narrow, muddy streets, and the general aspect of poverty in the appearance of the people and their surroundings. There is a strange medley of a feudal state of things in combination with some of the marked peculiarities of modern civilization, such as telegraphs, telephones, street trams,

railways, sewing-machines, newspapers, an orderly police, gas lamps and electric-lights. The Jinrikishas, light carriages for one person, drawn by a man, who trots at a rapid pace, is a distinguishing feature of the city life.

## Impressions of the Capital.

When one goes on by rail eighteen miles to Tokio, the capital, the same features appear. The small, wooden buildings, narrow streets, muddy roads, but few handsome, public buildings; and yet, a population of more than 1,600,000 registered inhabitants, and an area as large as Paris. The city extends over a level plain, on made-ground rescued from the sea many years ago, and it is intersected by numerous canals, ramifying in all directions; so that it calls to mind the cities of Holland. These ancient canals serve for the transfer of heavy, bulky merchandise, and the quiet of the place is seldom disturbed by rumbling, noisy carts and drays. Horses are but little employed. The peacefulness of the city is still further enhanced by the absence of street-cries, or loud shouting, or uproarious singing by night-brawlers. Even the many children playing their games in the streets, are not boisterous or unruly. The first impression is that of a very dense population dwelling in a confined space, in extremely narrow quarters, very busy, thinly clad, with bare legs and arms and breasts, wearing no hats, and shod in flimsy slippers. The mothers go about with their infants strapped to their backs, or the elder brothers and sisters take the load as if it were a proper burden; nor have I seen any baby roughly handled. In fact, in spite of the poverty, the babies and the children are usually fat and rosy, evidently well-nourished.

## The "Little Brown Man."

The Japanese are small; the men not much above five feet; the women four feet, six or eight inches, copper-colored. There are two things for which all classes ardently yearn; to be whiter, and to be taller. It will be long before these wishes can be gratified. To be larger they must be better fed and warmed for some generations to make a decided improvement. And to become white they must systematically marry into the lighter-colored sections of the population; besides avoiding so much exposure to the sun as is now habitual.

## Advance of Civilization.

In five hundred years there may be a gratifying change. Their civilization is only just emerging from a hoary feudalism, which shows its baleful influence throughout the nation. Subjugated by their Shoguns, their Daimiyos, their Samurai, the warrior nobles; with minds beclouded by a formal superstition; shut off for centuries from commercial intercourse with other nations; limited by the use of a semibar-

barous, difficult language; it is a wonder that they do show decided progress, and especially, that they are universally anxious to improve, and to welcome the benefits of western civilization. The influence of the United States upon them has been immense; and they rightly judge that the spread of a knowledge of the English language will be a most powerful means of enlightenment. It is now systematically taught in their schools and colleges to both sexes. Not a few young Japanese go to England or the United States to perfect themselves in their education.

## The Foreign Colony.

The foreign residents of Tokio number about 600. They may be divided into three classes; Missionaries, Teachers and Professors, and Trading, Commercial men. Not trusting to my own superficial knowledge, I give the statements of these persons who have resided many years in the country, as to the Japanese in general. The Missionaries, have only words of praise. They find the people admirable, and in the following respects: They are docile, teachable, polite, studious, pious, warm-hearted, frugal, clean, and most industrious. The Teachers and Professors describe them as polite, vain, studious, enthusiastic, but changeable, tricky, untruthful, slow, quiet, good-humored, and causing no trouble in their classes. The Traders and Commercial men are unanimous in giving an unfavorable judgment. They find them tricky, untruthful, mean, unreliable, narrow-minded, slow to fulfill obligations, very unpunctual, sly, hypocritical, the polite manner only a thin varnish, flattering, weak, vain of a very little knowledge, and too ready in conversation to assent to anything whatever. These persons all regard the Chinese as far superior. The favorable opinion of the Missionaries arises from the fact that they have mainly to do with proselytes and church members, and do not get into close contact with the general population. The Traders undoubtedly see the worst traits more clearly. All agree that it will be slow work to bring this people up to the average of the English or Americans. A task for centuries. Some few despair of any such consummation.

## For the Future.

The people must be better fed; better housed; better clothed, better educated, especially the female sex. Women are ground down, and are not much superior to slaves. Their homes must be recreated, and all their ideas of life enlarged. The leading men of the nation realize this fully, and the government sympathizes, and does what it can to elevate the standards, and to make it easier for the whole people to make more rapid progress. It is to the credit of the more highly civilized nations of the earth, that they are inclined to lend a helping-hand. This is certainly true of the United States.

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