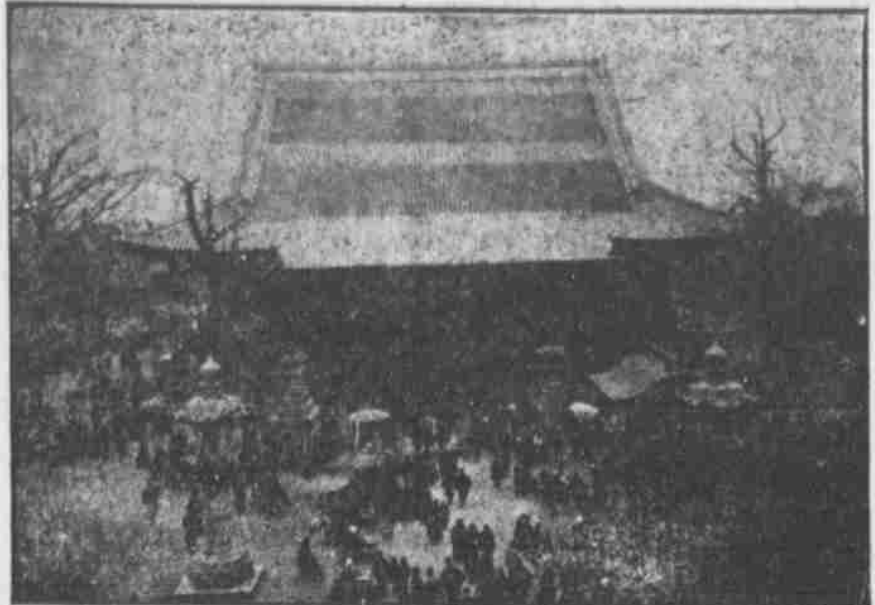


Asakusa--the Garden Where Japanese Mix Pleasure and Piety



TEMPLE OF THE GODDESS OF MERCY AT ASAKUSA.



LOOKING OUT THROUGH THE GATEWAY OF ASAKUSA.



BEAUTIFUL GATEWAY AND PAGODA IN THE TEMPLE PLEASURE GROUNDS.

JAPAN doesn't even play like anybody else. In her pleasures; in her ordinary summer holiday foolishness, she is, as in all things of a sacred Buddhist lantern, delighting a gaping crowd with skillful tricks of necromancy. He took from his big kimono sleeve a bit of brown paper, common unattractive brown paper, and proceeded, after carefully showing it to the audience, to roll it up into a little round ball about the size of a robin's egg. He showed it to us and smiled foolishly, shrugging his shoulders comically, then he rolled it around a time or two again, opened his hands and presto, it was gone. Of course, he reached up and produced it from the back of his neck with a child-like smile which made the audience laugh as if it had not seen the same trick done a thousand times before. But this was not all. Again he began to slowly roll it around and then he shut it up in one hand and blew upon it knowingly. Pretty soon he began to pull out from between his fingers yards upon yards of crepe paper cut in fine strips. He blew upon his hands again, gave it a funny little flip and a perfect cloud of confetti flew out over the heads of the people. He made believe to shut his hand very tight and then he began to dig into it with his other fingers and in a moment he pulled out a whole flowering peony bush of crepe paper which spread itself out into perfect gorgeousness. Nobody could have expected more than that but that was not all. He began to push one finger vigorously into this wonderful closed fist and pretty soon a long stick began to appear which grew and grew until it became a huge umbrella which he opened with a click in the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd.

Genius of Japan.
"Well," I thought, "if that doesn't exactly illustrate the genius of Japan I never saw anything else." Japan is unfolding marvels of itself every day before an admiring world and to its ever-increasing applause, but to us, its visitors, its most intimate observers, it is as the bit of brown paper, revealing to our unassisted mental vision absolutely no evidence of the wonderful powers with which it is endowed. This is the thought which goes with me always as I wander around among its credulous and oddities trying to bridge the gulf which is fixed between us and her--fixed as surely as broad oceans are fixed between our shores. Even in the midst of the country's most recently imported modernities this thought is sure to intrude itself upon one, but in such a place as Asakusa it is the uppermost idea.

What is Asakusa?
It is difficult to determine at first whether Asakusa is a place of prayer or a place of play, but one very soon concludes that as far as one's self is concerned it is a place of both. It is a temple. Everything in Japan which rises an inch above the dead level of single storied, gray-tiled monotony is either a temple or a new building in "foreign style," so-called, somebody says, because it is a style foreign to anything else anybody ever saw. Asakusa is neither. It is a temple wherein she of a thousand hands, Kwannon, goddess of mercy, sits unshrined in gaudy splendor. So ancient, indeed, is it that its beginnings are "lost in obscurity," as the guide books say about so many things. It is situated away down on the Sumida river, which flows sluggishly through the heart of Tokyo and out into Yedo bay, and near the spot where it stands, a fisherman, they say, drew up in his net, sometime about the year 600, a remarkable little image of the Goddess of Mercy, which possessed miraculous powers. It was about one and one-half inches in height and was supposed to have been fashioned by god hands, so perfect was it in every detail. But knowing the wonderful skill displayed by some of the least of these people in the art of good carving, I can imagine nothing more god-like than a lazy fisherman digging daintily away at a small bit of wood through long summer days and finally dropping his finished image overboard with a prayer to the deity it was made to represent for much luck in his fishing. It would be a beautiful addition to somebody's art-curio collection anyway, but this is a fate that is not likely to be in store for it since it is enshrined within the holy of holies of this great temple of Asakusa, and is never looked upon by other than priestly eyes. The temple is enormous and there is a popular joke about the disproportion of its size to the size of the image it was built to shelter. But there is much at Asakusa besides the diminutive goddess. Kwannon is worshipped much, but they are to be all the unhappy and unfortunate go in prayer, and she bids them be light of heart because the time is not far off when she will appear to them in one of her many hands shall sever the thread which binds them to earth life and they may then go to the River of the Three Roads where perchance they may be able to choose that one leads upward to Nirvana, the divine absorption into blissful Nothingness, and over the country, pleasure and piety intermingles themselves so freely, why it is so difficult to discover indeed where one leaves off and the other begins. The approach to the temple at Asakusa



HIGHEST STRUCTURE IN JAPAN--TOWER IN THE ASAKUSA PLEASURE GROUNDS.

politeness and consideration for the feelings of others is supposed to have reached its highest development. Everybody remembers how she was received. She very sensibly wore her native costume with little white tabi, or ankle socks, and straw sandals, and she instantly became exhibit A in New York drawing rooms. The young gentlemen of the smart set treated her very much as if she were an oddly dressed doll brought in for their amusement, to be looked over and picked to pieces at their pleasure, and O. Yuki-San, they say, bore it most patiently. Society did not have the excuse, moreover, of knowing that she was "only a Geisha girl," and consequently used to being stared at and talked through, the "Midway" and get into the shelter of the great temple where one may at least take refuge up against a pillar and become the observer of one's observers. Within the temple yard there are many strangenesses. Flocks of sacred pigeons fight with common barnyard chickens and the half-tamed geese buy for them from the wretched little old women who sit under the huge votive lanterns watching their stores and knitting perhaps, or gossiping. A fortune teller in priestly garb intones a "Namu Amida Butsu" (Glory to the Eternal Buddha) as he waits under his big yellow paper umbrella for some believing one to come along.

Within the Temple Yard.
At Asakusa one is glad enough to hurry

lyng near a few rin to barter for a glimpse into his future state. A seller of pink sundried dough cries his wares in strident tones beside a purveyor of yellow literature which shrieks aloud for itself in such colors as never came from any printing press but Japanese.
Under the temple steps is the inevitable old woman with evil eyes and blackened teeth sitting beside a cage of wild sparrows, all fluttering pitiously against their prison bars. She sits as grim and rubs her hands and when some kind soul is moved to purchase the freedom of one or more of them she bows very low and chuckles, then she probably sends her boy off to watch the flight of the little sufferers and to catch them again when they stop to rest their tired and stiffened wings. One mounts the long, broad temple steps in the midst of a clattering throng and in astonishment turns to look upon the scene spread below. The great twofold gateway through which we have come is painted a brilliant fuming red and the intricate art by which the timbers are joined under the deep eaves is emphasized by touches of bright blue and white which lights up the interstices and makes the whole structure look like a huge puzzle in bright colored building blocks.

Scene for a Drama.
The author of "A Japanese Nightingale" should have copied the interior of the place for the temple scenes in which her poor little singing girl is made an unwilling vestal virgin, but they say the author of "A Japanese Nightingale" never saw Japan so one cannot wonder that her temple was like nothing that ever grew in this country. The Asakusa shrine would try to depict an ideal scene in a Japanese drama if it were cleaned up a bit and a few of the sacred dominick hens chased out of it. To describe it is quite impossible. The altar, all gold leaf and gewgaws, is behind a huge wire net, put up to protect it from the chickens, likely, and outside this net all is motley madness. Great lanterns, as much as fifteen feet long and eight feet in diameter, are suspended in either end of the high coiled room and all round them are smaller ones, each bearing its message in the Japanese mind in huge black ideographs splashed upon its yellow surface. Goblins shaped drums sit here and there with little cotton wrapped mallets

Quaint Features of the Garden.
One had to thread one's way carefully among the kneeling people before the screened altar and perhaps one's self to be carried along with the crowd out through the side entrance to the gardens, where all was holiday merriment. Queer shows of all sorts lined the muddy avenue down one side of the garden and if one doesn't mind getting splashed to the knees it is possible to derive a modicum of amusement from the glaring signboards and the "barkers" who sit at all the entrances lifting up their voices in mournful invitations to people to come and view the wonders within. It is always muddy in all such places, and the Japanese like it that way, evidently. If the sun begins to dry the mud up a bit a water boy, who seems intent on overworking himself, comes along with two pails on the ends of a stick balanced on one shoulder and a big bamboo dipper, proceeds to throw great puddles of water over one's feet as it sprinkling. Of course, those who wear leather shoes mind it, and as they are about one out of every 999, they don't count. All the others, men, women and children, wear wooden geta which stand up on little stilted feet a few inches off the ground, so what care they for a few inches of slush, more or less?

A Business Proposition.
A plantation like this is a business proposition. It requires large capital and it will probably bring large profits. The work upon it is thoroughly systematized and the business will be run like a great American factory, with due regard to its cost element. As soon as Mr. Gray brought the farm he put it in charge of an expert agriculturist named Schmidt, who had been employed by him in the United States. Mr. Schmidt is a graduate of one of the best agricultural colleges of Germany, and had charge of the emperor's gardens in Berlin at one time and later studied fruit culture in France. He aided Mr. Gray in picking out the property and then started to clear it. It had all been under cultivation, but had run down since the war, and parts of it were covered with trees and underbrush. The trees were all cut and the timber made into charcoal. Charcoal is the chief fuel of Havana, and Gray had no trouble in disposing of his 15,000 acres which came from the clearing. After this he began to set out the farm and has gradually increased the cultivated area until he now has almost 500 acres of oranges, grape fruit and pineapples.

Storming of Nanshan.
There is one thing now at Asakusa which bears some resemblance to a place of amusement, and that is a panorama of "foreign style" of the storming of Nanshan. The Japanese fleet off in the blue waters of Kinchow bay on the east are sending lurid, wonderful shells through the air to meet those hurled by the Russian fleet from alien an on the west, while the "China fleet" is also in the water, locked in a struggle that is simply beautiful. Nothing feases the valiant Japanese. He says to the cringing Russian "Take that! and that! and there now!" and then strikes an attitude on the highest point in the landscape just where the light from the bursting shell may illuminate his noble men as he overlooks with sorrow the fearful havoc he has wrought. Barbed wire entanglements, big guns, shrieking shells, insurmountable obstacles, all difficulties of war are mere incidents, background as it were against which this Japanese attitude may display itself before the admiring eyes of Japan. But the wonderful part of it is the fact that it is only for the eyes of Japan. To the world they turn an entirely different face and the world exclaims "How modern! There are absolutely no limits to Japanese genius, but I think the greatest thing it achieves is this concealment of itself. A mask is held up before the world and the work is done in Japan, and only by accidental flashes or revelation do we recognize the fact that it isn't. Foreigners are permitted to live in the country, but we are shut out of Japan as completely as we ever were in the days before Commodore Perry came into Yedo bay with his gunboats. They play a little game of jiu-jitsu with us and win all their points by yielding, and we know they win but we cannot help ourselves. We must admire. They are quite polite, apart from all other people, selfish, but they are one of us and we can only hope that for our own peace of mind they may continue to conceal themselves.

Oranges in Cuba.
From the pineapple fields I went on into the orange orchard, where I met the manager, Mr. Schmidt, and the son of Adam Gray, a young man of 25, who has just graduated at Yale college and has come to Cuba to help work this farm. When I saw him he was superintending the spraying of the fruit trees. He tells me that Cuba has five different varieties of scale and that it pays to spray. In company with Mr. Schmidt, I walked through the groves. The orange trees are planted twenty feet apart. They are carefully plowed and hoed and are watched like a choice orchard at home. The trees are now about 4 years old and they have

Hundreds of Acres of Pineapples.
I wish I could show you this farm as it appeared when I rode through it today. It extends for more than a mile along the road and at the front and side of it runs a long row of magnificent palms, each from 100 to 150 feet high, with a trunk like a marble column, out of the top of which great fan-like leaves rise in the wind. The roads are of a rich brown. After this was distinctly seen, the great round balls of red and yellow set in long green leaves tipped with pink. Farther away pines and leaves blended together, and the whole under the sun became a gorgeous cloth more splendid than the dress of a queen. The pineapples are planted in rows, but the plants are set close together and they yield a great number per acre. I am told they bring on the average about 2 cents apiece when sold, and that each costs the farmer about 1 cent to raise. The pineapples of Cuba are large, and those which I had on the Gray farm, fresh from the field, were delicious.

(Continued on Page Eight.)

How Cuban Government is Developing the Island

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SANTIAGO DE LAS VEGAS, Cuba, July 23.—Special correspondence from Santiago de las Vegas, Cuba. The Cuban government is preparing to develop the island. It has established a department of agriculture, and is sending out experts to prospect the different provinces, to test the soil and report upon its value. Many samples of soil have been sent to the United States Agricultural department for analysis and advice, and a variety of experiments are being made in fertilizers and new branches of farming. This is not only as to sugar and tobacco, which are the main crops of the island, but also as to fruits, vegetables, hennep, sea island cotton and other things. The experiments are largely carried on by Americans. The most of the employees are graduates of our Agricultural department at Washington and here at Santiago de las Vegas, about fifteen miles from Havana, a government experimental farm is in operation, under such management, with an American director, who was brought here on the recommendation of Secretary Wilson.

Cuba a Big Farm.
Before I describe the station, let me say a word about the island. It is one of the biggest farming propositions on earth. It has more good soil than the valley of the Nile, and it promises to be the great winter fruit and vegetable garden of the United States. Cuba lies in Uncle Sam's front yard, with a short water road to his kitchen door. The island is about as big as Pennsylvania, and although it is mountainous in places, the soil is good to the tops of the hills and almost every bit of it can be farmed.

Japan has a greater area and it supports between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 people, but it is only about 10 per cent of it tillable. Java is as big as Cuba, but it is largely taken up by mountain ranges, with active volcanoes and arid lands. Nevertheless, Java supports 25,000,000.

Cuba today has less than 1,500,000, and it is safe to say that it will some time rival Java in its products, though it will always have a less population, for a Javanese can live where a Cuban would starve. The two islands raise about the same crops--sugar, tobacco and tropical fruits with coffee, on the uplands. Java is now growing tea and quinine, but these articles have not been subject to experiment in Cuba.

So far less than one-third of this island has been laid out in farms, and at the close of the war only 3 per cent of its area was under cultivation. There is more sugar, but it is safe to say that not one-sixth of the island is used. The best cultivation is done in the provinces of Havana and Matanzas, and also in the tobacco fields of Pinar del Rio. At present sugar is the most important crop, being produced in all the provinces. Tobacco comes next, raised chiefly in Pinar del Rio, and away down at the foot is coffee, which was once more important than sugar, and which now, owing to the tariff and other conditions, will again come to the front.

Cuba's Experimental Station.
The agricultural farm at Santiago de las Vegas is the center of this new agricultural development. It is run by the government, which gives it large appropriations and pushes its work in every possible way. The director is Prof. F. S. Earle, who was for years connected with the United States Department of Agriculture, and who at the time the Cuban government asked for a man for this work, was ab-

ported some choice Durham, Hereford, Jersey, Polled Angus and other bulls and cows and many of these are kept at Santiago de las Vegas. They will be shipped, I suppose, to the provinces best fitted for stock. Prof. Earle tells me that most of the cattle now here come from native animals crossed by importations from South America and Jamaica, Porto Rico and others of the West Indies. The common beasts imported are mostly of the long-horned, raw-boned variety and so far the Venezuela stock seem to thrive best. The Agricultural department expects to take this stock as a basis and cross it with the best of foreign breeds.

The department is also experimenting in raising beets and the various grasses for cattle food. I am told that one acre of the best Cuban grass will keep a cow the year around. There is one variety of pasture known as guinea grass, which grows so high that it is above your head as you ride through it on horseback.

New Fruits for Cuba.
In the banana fields there are a score of varieties which have just been introduced from Porto Rico, and near by twenty varieties of peaches and fifteen varieties of Japanese persimmons have been planted. There are figs from California, Japanese walnuts and all sorts of grapes which grow well in the southern parts of the United States. Among the most important experiments are those with citrus fruits. All the best-known limes, lemons and pomelos are now being planted or budded. More than thirty different varieties of oranges have been planted for comparison and study, and also a large number of pineapples of different kinds.

The government is making experiments in stock breeding. It has recently im-



PART OF THE MAIN BUILDING AT CUBAN AGRICULTURAL STATION.

The approach to the temple at Asakusa

ELEANOR FRANKLIN.