

Farming in Japan Lacks Modern Machinery But Not Steady Effort



JAPANESE FARMER AND WIFE



RICE PLANTS ARE SET OUT IN ROWS.



COUNTRY SCENE IN WESTERN JAPAN.

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SAKA, Japan.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—During the last two months I have been traveling through the farming districts of Japan. It should be an object lesson to the United States. The country is kept like a garden, and it is as fat as the valley of the Nile. A great part of it, however, is covered with forests, much of it is mountainous, and, all told, the cultivated parts are half as big as the state of Ohio. Nevertheless, this small area is now feeding more than 50,000,000 people, or more than one-half as many as we have in the United States. It produces every year 100,000,000 bushels of rice, barley and wheat, 250,000,000 bushels of rice and nearly 300,000,000 pounds of tobacco. It grows 50,000,000 pounds of tea, 10,000,000 bushels of silk cocoons, as well as buckwheat, millet, beans, indigo, cotton and hemp. The rice crop alone is worth \$200,000,000 per annum.

Among the Farmers.
I can give you no idea of the intensive cultivation which is going on here. The whole country is divided up into patches, ranging in size from that of a bed quilt to tracts of an acre or so, and every bit of it is as clean as weeds as a government flower bed. There are no fences and one looks over a crisp quilt, made up of patches of many colored crops, bound together with the green grass which forms the boundaries of the fields. The Japanese farms are, on the average, not more than two acres in size, and only 15 per cent of all the holdings are of more than four acres. The ownership is widely scattered. There are, altogether, about 8,000,000 families engaged in agriculture, and many of these have their whole living from two acres of ground. Others have small tracts of their own and rent more. As it is today, only about one-half of the land is worked by the owners. The rest is farmed by tenants who pay a proportion of the crops or high money rents.

But come with me and take a look at the farming country. It is nothing like that of America. There are no barns nor haystacks. There are no big fields and no cattle nor horses. The ordinary Japanese farmer would look upon a Pennsylvania bank barn as a temple and worship in it if he saw it. He would look upon our sheep as so many wild animals, and a Friesian horse or a Shorthorn cow would be as much out of place on his little tract as the traditional bull in the china shop. This is so, notwithstanding there are something like 2,000,000 cattle and horses in Japan. Most of them, however, are used for freighting or as draft animals to carry goods over the country.

All Hand Labor.
On the other hand the American farmer would be lost if he came to Japan. If he brought along a reaping machine, his horses would trample down his neighbors' crops while turning it around in his field; and, as for a threshing machine, it would mob him for taking away the work from the laboring classes. He could not use his plows without he bought up a whole county, and his fences would be useless, to say the least. He would be surprised at every step at the methods of good cultivation. He would see wheat, oats and barley planted in series and transplanted

again in rows a hand's breadth apart. He would see these crops weeded as we weed onions and would eventually see them reaped with sickles close to the ground. After cutting, the straws are laid end to end in little sheaves and tied with a wisp at the bottom. Each sheaf is then pulled apart and hung over a rope or a pole, like washing, to dry. Later on the heads of the grain are cut off with a knife and threshed out with a flail. In many places the grain is winnowed by throwing it up into the air, and in others the farmers use separators or hand fanning mills turned by a crank.

Plowing with Mattocks.
The work of preparing the land is quite as hard as the planting and harvesting. The most of the country is dug over again and again every year. It is chopped with mattocks, which have blades four or five inches wide and as long as your arm. These are so made that the man or woman who uses them must bend double while digging. I have seen women with babies tied to their backs thus working in the rice fields. Their kimonos are tied up over their knees, and they wade through the mud as they set out the plants. I know of no crop which takes so much work as rice, and this is the money crop of Japan. It ranks here as wheat does with us, and Japan is rich or poor according as the rice crop does well or ill. In times past the royal taxes were paid in rice, and today the financiers watch the growth of this crop as our people do corn, cotton and wheat.

Rice Crop.
The greater part of the rice crop is raised by irrigation. The fields are made at different levels, and the water from the hills is run by canals from one to the other. The ground is prepared during the winter. It is covered with manure and made as level as the floor. Along about the 1st of April it is broken up with a hoe or spade and then flooded. In the meantime the rice plants have been grown from the seeds in nurseries. They are taken up and scattered over the water as needed. Then the men, women and children of the family tie up their clothes and wade out in the mud. They set the plants out in rows of bunches of four to six plants each. They are so close together that it takes from 1,500 to 3,000 bunches per acre. The water is left on and the rice rapidly grows.

The planting is done about June. The rice soon appears above the water and within a few weeks the whole of the country is a beautiful green. Almost every plant is watched. One sees big hatted farmers dressed in blue gowns trotting along through the fields. If they see a plant out of shape or not deep enough in the water, they will reach down and fix it and in this way ever rice stalk yields its best product. As to the amount of labor required for such cultivation, if you will imagine one of our farmers sprouting his wheat in a seed bed, and then setting out each plant with a dibble and weeding and cultivating it, you will get some idea of it.

Harvesting Rice.
The harvesting of the rice is even more difficult than harvesting wheat. After the grain is cut it has to be pulled from the straw and be husked before it can be used. If you will take a sheaf of rice, cut, and fasten pull them over a cross-cut saw, fasten

them to a piece of wood about the height of a table, so that all the grains are torn off, you will have a fair idea of how the Japanese get their rice from the straw. The grains are still in the husks, and the husks have to be taken off before it can be used. This is mostly done by hand, the grain in the shell being put in a mortar and pounded with a wooden pestle until the kernels are free. Some of the farmers have rice mills, worked by water, and others hulling machines, worked by hand. Much of the rice is winnowed by machinery, small hand mills being used.

Good rice field ought to produce forty bushels to the acre, and some of the best lands here produce more. Japan has altogether almost 200 different kinds of rice, and it raises some of the best rice of the world. Its finest varieties are so valuable that much of them are exported to other countries, the nation importing poorer kinds at lower prices for its own food.

In the Farm Villages.
The Japanese farmers seldom live on their farms. They have little villages of wooden houses thatched with straw. Here they come at night and from here they go out in the morning to work. The people generally work in gangs. You seldom see a man alone in the fields. A whole family—father, mother, boys and girls—all work together. There are many hired hands, and the wages paid are exceedingly small. It is a poor part of the United States where a farm hand is not worth 50 cents a day and his board, or where he gets less than \$15 a month if employed the year round. The wages here would board and house a man and his family, and women, with much less for children. The work goes on from sunrise to sunset, and it is fully as hard as any on our farms at home. Hands employed by the year re-

ceive proportionately less. Including board, men are paid about \$3 a year, or less than \$5 a month; the women get about \$4 a month. In a government report of 1906 I see that male farm laborers were getting less than \$20 a year, and females less than \$10. There is a steady rise going on in wages of all kinds, and these cannot remain as they are.

In some cases farm laborers hire out to work only on alternate days, devoting themselves to their own little tracts of land during the rest of the week. Boys are often bound out to farmers for terms of from five to seven years, their pay being little more during the time than their board and clothes. Of late, I understand, there has been a considerable movement of the farming classes to the cities, and just now there are many who are emigrating to Korea and Manchuria.

Educating the Farmers.
Indeed, the farmers of Japan are rapidly changing. There are public schools everywhere and the boys and girls of the country communities attend them. Nearly every man can read and write, and most of the landholders know what is going on as to scientific cultivation. The government is doing a great deal along the lines of agricultural education. It has big agricultural colleges at Tokio and Sapporo, and there are thirty-six smaller colleges which are teaching theoretical and practical farming in the towns and prefectures. There are special colleges in Kyoto devoted to the art of silk culture, and instruction is also given in tea raising and in the other specialties of Japan.

The government has 310 traveling lecturers, who go from town to town and from district to district preaching advance agriculture to the farmers and instructing them as to insects, fertilizers and various

Stock Farming.
Within the last few years Japan has done a great deal to improve its live stock. It had practically none of much value at the time that Commodore Perry came here. It has now 1,000,000,000 cattle and 1,000,000,000 horses, and one can buy good beef at all of the ports. When I first came to Japan it was impossible to get anything else but tinned butter. There are now numerous dairies and fresh butter, unsalted is sold in most of the cities. The masses of the people use neither butter nor meat. They live upon fish, rice and vegetables, which they eat with a sauce called soy.

The most of the soldiers who went from the farms in Manchuria to fight the Russians there made their first acquaintance with beef in the consumption of canned meats from America, and it is probable from this that a demand for meat may spring up.

As to cattle, the government has now an imperial breeding farm which is supplied with animals purchased by experts who were sent abroad for the purpose. The favorite cattle are Ayrshires and Simmenthals a number of each being kept.

Japanese Horses.
The Japanese are doing all they can to improve their horses. The emperor has a number of studs and horse farms, and his men are importing animals for their improvement every year. He has Arabs, trotters, thoroughbreds and hackneys, altogether numbering about 500 stallions and distributed to the chief breeding centers. There is now a horse administration bureau, which is under the control of the cabinet, with an ex-minister of state as its chief. The business of this is to improve the Japanese stock, with the special object of furnishing better animals for the army. I understand that 1,500 stallions of foreign breed are to be purchased and distributed to the chief breeding centers. Where they are to be paired with native mares. The improvement program is to extend thirty years.

At present most of the horses here are stocky ponies of Mongolian breed. They have been somewhat crossed with Percherons, and as a result they are very strong and hardy. I see some of them hauling enormous loads on carts through the streets of the cities. They are always hitched up singly, and the driver invariably walks, leading the horse.

As to imported horses, a number were brought here from America in 1872, and after the war with China systematic introduction of foreign stallions began. At present there are 1,374 such animals in the various government depots and studs.

New Agricultural Societies.
I am surprised at the interest that the farmers are taking in improved agriculture. They have something like 1,000 different societies, and new methods are being discussed in every town, village and farming district. They are alive to the use of artificial fertilizers, and of late have been importing a vast quantity of sulphate of ammonia. They understand the use of manure better than we do, and by applying them directly to the plants are able to get better results. Every bit of stable manure is saved, and notwithstanding the comparatively small number of animals that now used in a year is valued at almost \$5,000,000. Another fertilizer which is largely purchased is fish guano. This is made by boiling down herring for their oil, the refuse being sold to the farmers. Such manure brings in millions of dollars a year, and just now a great deal is coming from Sapporo, the lower part of which island Japan got from Russia. The herring fisheries there are valuable, yielding an oil cake which is shipped to Japan.

One of the most important fertilizers of the Japanese farmer is night soil, which is used to the amount of \$2,000,000 annually. This is saved in city, village and country, and it has a regular market value. You can smell the wagons carrying this stuff at certain hours every night in any Japanese city, and at these hours it is best to remain in one's hotel. Such manure is fermented in wells and is not fit for use in gardens to keep out the rain. It is dipped out in buckets and sprinkled directly upon the plants. For this reason the average foreigner who understands anything about Japanese gardening will not eat salads nor any new vegetables unless cooked.

How State Helps Farmers.
This country has a live up-to-date de-

partment of agriculture. It is associated with the ministry of commerce, and it deals with almost everything that comes out of the soil. It has branches devoted to insect diseases, to fertilizers and to stock raising. The nation is doing all it can to make two blades of grass grow where one has grown before, and it is trying to open up new areas to cultivation. Japan has been farmed for more than 2,000 years, and it is difficult to find much good uncultivated land. Every available foot seems to be used, but by changing the hills, and more particularly by consolidating the holdings of owners who have small tracts in the same district, much has been done. As it is now, the fields are of all shapes. Here one is square and further on is a triangular patch. The country is made up of patches of all shapes and sizes, but none contains more than an acre or so. The government has persuaded the farmers of certain localities by means of the exemption of taxation on their lands for certain time to unite or exchange their holdings so that they may make rectangular fields and thus do away with many of the boundaries and paths. This has not only increased the area, but has brought about better farming and bigger crops. Some land has been redeemed in the Hokkaido, or as we call it, Yezo; and there is something like 700,000 acres of new land there. Lands are being opened up in Formosa, and an attempt is being made to fill up the waste lands of Korea.

House Industries by Farmers.
At present the farming country is overstocked with people, and most of the farmers have some sort of house industry which they carry on while not engaged in cultivating the soil. This has not only increased the area, but has brought about better farming and bigger crops. Some land has been redeemed in the Hokkaido, or as we call it, Yezo; and there is something like 700,000 acres of new land there. Lands are being opened up in Formosa, and an attempt is being made to fill up the waste lands of Korea.

Banks for Farmers.
One feature of the government help is a part of the Japanese banking system. There is one big bank, the Hypothec, with a capital of \$5,000,000, which loans out money to farm districts and to farmers' associations and even to individuals upon real estate security. It gives long time loans, payable by installments and at a low rate of interest, and it also issues savings bonds, in denominations as low as \$2.50, for the encouragement of thrift. And then there is the Industrial Bank of Japan, with a business of somewhat the same nature, which has a capital of about \$8,000,000, and a number of agricultural and industrial banks, each of which has a capital of \$100,000 or more, which work in combination with the Hypothec bank in loaning to farmers and to the cities, towns and villages upon long time and at low interest. All of these banks pay good dividends and are adding to their surpluses.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

New Y. W. C. A. Home
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and a smaller room for the ordinary group of contestants, there is an auditorium that is a real gem in the line of theatrical architecture. It will seat comfortably on the main floor and in the balcony, 600 people, and Mr. Thomas R. Kimball, the designer, has full reason to be proud of the remarkably beautiful place he has set in the interior of the building for lectures, recitals and club meetings. It delights the eye, fills one's ideal of what such a hall should be, and the acoustics are pronounced perfect. By a clever arrangement the auditorium can be shut off from the other parts of the building, with an entrance from St. Mary's avenue, and thus shut off it has ticket office and everything complete for the use of those who may rent it from time to time. The association expects substantial revenue from this auditorium as its beauty and handiness becomes known.

Women may bring their men friends to eat in the cafe, but the cafeteria is for women exclusively. In both rooms members of the association are allowed a 30 per cent discount. There are writing and reading rooms, and magazines and newspapers of current dates, and an employment bureau that gets busy in a hearty way when called on. A boarding house directory is also kept for strangers seeking places to live, and a check room is set apart on the main floor for packages.

The business office equipment lacks nothing that could be thought of.

"Anything lacking?" Someone replies: "What about dormitories? Why not have sleeping accommodations? One answer is, is this a business building, with wide-spreading activities, small enough, and too small in very truth, for all the duties of daily life it aims to discharge. Another answer is, to give up space to sleeping accommodations that would be at all adequate to the possible demand would mean the abandonment of much practical public service. Long and prayerful consideration was given to that feature, but as real work for a very large clientele was the prime object of all the striving that went to the erection of this home and school and business building for women, sleeping rooms had to be left out. It is a complete structure for a large purpose as it stands, solidly built on a commodious plan, very tastefully and very substantially furnished, and throughout gives to all who may enter the feeling embodied in a couplet printed in the report of the association for 1906: "Home not merely four square walls; Though with pictures hung and gilded; A home where affection calls, Filled with shrines true hearts have builded."

Lesson of a Proverb.
"Mamma," said small Gregorio, who had been reading proverbs, "I know why a burnt child dreads the fire."
"Why, dear?" asked his mother.
"Because when he gets burned once, the burn makes him smart enough to keep away from the stove again."

Personal Aspects of John Paul Breen

JOHN PAUL BREEN, the republican candidate for mayor of Omaha, is in the prime of life, right in the neighborhood of 52 years of age. He is six feet tall, weighs 190 pounds, and is in the best physical condition, clean as a hound's tooth, and looks like an athlete, straight and spry.

Scotch-Irish by descent and parentage, he has gone through all of the conditions from close-held boyhood, public school life, country school teacher, principal of a small town school, law student, office holder as county recorder for one term, admitted lawyer, practicing attorney, city attorney for thirteen months by appointment, then more general law practice—and now the duty chosen for the state in a campaign which picked him out for favor in a public primary.

Mr. Breen is a bachelor, and it must be from choice, because this type of man appeals to sensible women, as a rule. He lives happily in the home of a married sister, out Hancock Park way, and has nieces and nephews enough to make him feel it is good to be represented in the next generation.

There is an air about John P. Breen that has been subject of criticism to some extent, and even those who regard him very kindly have wondered what it is. The man is not repellent in manner, or at all unattractive; in fact, quite the contrary when you get inside his guard, break down the rather crusty reserve that a studious lawyer unconsciously acquires. Breen's air that puzzles is a relic of his pedagogical days, the indefinable hint of authoritative administration that is common to all men who have been teachers for a longer or shorter time.



JOHN PAUL BREEN.

"Colleges and schools are the salvation of this country," said Mr. Breen, emphatically, as he signed a petition requesting the legislature to buy for the state the Wayne normal school, the creation of the late Professor Pile, now created to the state at a figure said to be greatly below its cost. This candidate for mayor is a studious man, a book-lover by reason of early training and natural disposition. On his desk top stands a set of Theodore Roosevelt's works, and in cases about his office are many law books in orderly array.

Mr. Breen taught four winter terms of district school in Iowa and served one year as principal at Dayton, in that state, always with an eye on the law. Fort Dodge, Ia., was the scene of all his upper schooling he had, except one year at Ames. When elected recorder of Webster county, Iowa, he worked faithfully in the discharge of his duties and studied hard in the law books, so that at the end of one term he gained the certificate of admission to the bar. Then he practiced in Fort Dodge and Cedar Rapids until 1887, when he came to Omaha. Here he has done very well in his profession and has taken on a hint of gray in the thinning hair on a well-shaped head. It is a large head, too, especially about the upper region, and bears on its front a very good face, which is decorated with a military mustache. The smile that fits across the countenance is not perennial, for this man is of a serious character, with whom life has been a serious proposition from the days of youth in Lockport, Ill., to the hard-working years of busy manhood in Omaha.

It was as city attorney for thirteen months, perhaps, that Mr. Breen became first very well known to the people of this city. When he assumed the office there were something over 200 cases pending in state and federal courts, left over from previous administrations. By pushing and planning and getting action in court, studying, trying cases as fast as they could be reached, he managed to make such a clearing of suits against Omaha on the various dockets that his successor was made heir to but eighty cases, including all the new ones that had not been reached on the calendar. It is fair, too, to say that several of the cases in which the city was interested took many days, and some of them many weeks, to try. His record as city attorney bespeaks the earnest nature of the man, for he was always at work.

"I play at golf," said Mr. Breen, "and I like a game of billiards, with an occasional try at the tennis alley. No, I have never beaten bogey, and am not much of a success at the other games, but I enjoy active exercise, and it does me good." One can easily believe this, for there is no noticeable swelling of the waist line on the man.

Hot Hunt for a Wedding Ring

THERE is enough humor, pathos, tragedy, excitement and funny situations in the experience of a Boston couple that came to Chicago to be married to furnish material for a melodrama that might appropriately be called "Fireman O'Neill's Wedding Day."

John M. O'Neill and Julia Williams are the leading characters, from Chicago Tribune. Each is 24 years old. O'Neill, who prefers to be called "Jack," is connected with the Boston fire department at the Bullfinch station.

It matters not how Jack wooed and won Julia, as that has no part in the story. Like Mary and John of whom the serio-comic used to sing a few years ago, "they were in love with each other," and they decided to get married.

While dining after the ceremony the bride chanced to look at her left hand and saw it was devoid of a wedding ring. She spoke to the groom about it and he said it had slipped his mind. The waiter was called over and O'Neill asked him if there were any jewelry stores in Chicago.

"I don't mean a junk shop," said the man from Boston. "I want to get a wedding ring. Do they keep them for sale in Chicago?"

It was then 7 o'clock and the jewelry stores were closed. O'Neill and Julia stores kept open all night in Boston and

he would try to find one in Chicago if the bride would await his return at the restaurant. He left his overcoat as a guaranty that he would come back.

O'Neill was unable to find any all-night jewelry stores, but he found several liquor emporiums. When he did not return to the restaurant the chief of police to the police that he had been murdered and robbed. She said he had a wallet in the inside pocket of his vest that contained over \$400.

In his fruitless search for a jewelry store O'Neill drank several highballs and for a time he forgot all about being married.

An engine company responding to a fire passed him on the street and he tried to follow the apparatus. He abandoned the chase after running two blocks.

In the meantime the bride had been taken in charge by the police. She was given shelter at the Harrison street annex—a strange place to spend one's wedding night. A description of the missing groom was sent to all police stations and before 10 o'clock the entire night force was on the lookout for him.

Some time before midnight O'Neill wandered into a Clark street second-hand store and bought a wedding ring. He was taken in charge by the police. She was given shelter at the Harrison street annex—a strange place to spend one's wedding night. A description of the missing groom was sent to all police stations and before 10 o'clock the entire night force was on the lookout for him.

The policeman recognized him as the missing groom and took him to the Central station, where his bride awaited him.