

licated by what has been said already concerning the æsthetics of speech. Speech and conduct are but diverse expressions of the same inner life. Japanese etiquette has been fashioned on the feudalistic theory of society, with its numberless gradations of inferior and superior. Assertive individualism, while allowed a certain range among the samurai, always had its well-marked limits. The mass of the people were compelled to walk a narrow line of respectful obedience and deference both in form and speech. The constant aim of the inferior was to please the superior. That individuals of an inferior rank had any inherent rights, as opposed to those of a superior rank, seldom occurred to them. Furthermore, this whole feudal system, with its characteristic etiquette of conduct and speech, was authoritatively taught by moralists and religious leaders, and devoutly believed by the noblest of the land. Ethical considerations, therefore, combined powerfully with those that were social and æsthetic to produce "the most polite race on the face of the globe." Recent developments of rudeness and discourtesy among themselves and toward foreigners have emphasized my general contention that these characteristics are not due to inherent race nature, but rather to the social order.

How are we to account for the wide æsthetic development of all classes of the Japanese? As already suggested, the beautiful scenery explains much. But I pass at once to the significant fact that although the classes of Japanese society were widely differentiated in social rank, yet they lived in close proximity to each other. There was no spatial gulf of separation preventing the lower from knowing fully and freely the thoughts, ideals, and customs of the upper classes. The transmission of culture was thus an easy matter, in spite of social gradations.

Moreover, the character of the building materials, and the methods of construction used by the more prosperous among the people, were easily imitated in kind, if not in costliness, by the less prosperous. Take, for example, the structure of the room; it is always of certain fixed proportions, that the uniform mats may be easily

fitted to it. The mats themselves are always made of a straw "toko," "bed," and an "omote," "surface," of woven straw; they vary greatly in value, but, of whatever grade, may always be kept neat and fresh at comparatively small cost. The walls of the average houses are made of mud wattles. The outer layers of plaster consist of selected earth and tinted lime. Whether put up at large or small expense, these walls may be neat and attractive. So, too, with other parts of the house.

The utter lack of independent thinking throughout the middle and lower classes, and the constant desire of the inferior to imitate the superior, have also helped to make the culture of the classes the possession of the masses. This subserviency and spirit of imitation has been further stimulated by the enforced courtesy and deference and obedience of the common people.

In this connection it should be noted, however, that the universality of culture in Japan is more apparent than real. The appearance is due in part to the lack of furniture in the homes. Without chairs or tables, bedsteads or washstands, and the multitude of other things invariably found in the home of the Occidental, it is easy for the Japanese housewife to keep her home in perfect order. No special culture is needful for this.

How it came about that the Japanese people adopted their own method of sitting on the feet, I cannot say; neither have I heard any plausible explanation of the practice. Yet this habit has relieved them of all necessity for heavy furniture. Given the custom of sitting on the feet, and a large part of the furniture of the house will be useless. Already is the introduction of furniture after Western patterns producing changes in the homes of the people; and it will be interesting to see whether the æsthetic sense of the Japanese will be able to assimilate and harmonize with itself these useful, but bulky and unæsthetic, elements of Occidental civilization.

That no part of the fine taste of the Japanese is due to the general civilization, rather than to the individual possession of the æsthetic faculty, may be inferred

from many little signs. In spite of the fact that, following the long-established social fashions, the women usually display good taste in the choice of colors for their clothing, it sometimes happens that they also manifest not the slightest sense of the harmony of colors. Daughters of wealthy families will array themselves in brilliant discordant hues, yet apparently without causing the wearers or their friends the slightest æsthetic discomfort. Little children are arrayed in clothing that would doubtless put Joseph's coat of many colors quite out of countenance. Combinations and brilliancy that to the Western eye of culture seem crude and gaudy, typical of barbaric splendor, are in constant use, and are apparently thought to be fine. The Japanese display both taste and its lack in the choice of colors for clothing; this contradiction is the more striking in view of the taste manifest in the decorations of the homes of all classes of the people. Few sights are more ludicrously unæsthetic than the red, yellow, and blue worsted crocheted caps and shawls for infants, which shock all our ideas of æsthetic harmony.

In connection with Western ways or articles of clothing, the native æsthetic faculty often seems to take its flight. In a foreign house many a Japanese seems to lose his sense of fitness. I have had schoolboys, and even gentlemen, enter my home with hobnailed muddied boots, without wiping their feet on the conspicuous door mat, which is the more remarkable since, in their own homes, they invariably take off their shoes on entering. I have frequently noticed that in railway cars the first comers monopolize the seats, and the later ones receive not the slightest notice, being often compelled to stand for an hour at a time, although, with a little moving, there would be abundant room for all. I have noticed this so often that I cannot think it an exceptional occurrence. I do not believe it to be intentional rudeness, but to be due simply to a lack of real heart politeness. Yet a true and deep æsthetic development, so far at least as relates to conduct, to say nothing of the spirit of altruism, would not permit such indifference to another's discomfort.

My explanation for this, and for all similar defects in etiquette, is somewhat as follows. Etiquette is popularly conceived as consisting of rules of conduct, rather than as the outward expression of the state of the heart. From time immemorial rules for the ordinary affairs of life have been formulated by superiors and have been taught the people. In all usual and conventional relations, therefore, the average farmer and peasant know how to express perfect courtesy. But in certain situations, as in foreign houses and the railroad car, where there are no precedents to follow, or rules to obey, all evidence of politeness takes its flight. The old rules do not fit the new conditions. Not being grounded on the inner principles of etiquette, the people are not able to formulate new rules for new conditions. To the Westerner, on the other hand, these seem to follow from the simplest principles of common sense and kindness. The general collapse of etiquette in Japan, which native writers note and deplore, is due, therefore, not only to the withdrawal of feudal pressure, but also to introduction of strange circumstances for which the people have no rules, and to the fact that the people have not been taught those underlying principles of high courtesy which are applicable on all occasions.

An impression seems to have gained currency in the United States that the unæsthetic features seen in Japan to-day are due to the debasing influences of Western art and Occidental intercourse. There can be no doubt that a certain type of tourist, ignorant of Japanese art, by greedily buying strange, gaudy things at high prices, has stimulated a morbid production of truly unæsthetic pseudo-Japanese art. But this accounts for only a small part of the grossly inartistic features of Japan. The instances given of hideous worsted bibs for babes and collars for dogs, combining in the closest proximity the most uncomplimentary and mutually repellent colors, has nothing whatever to do with foreign art or foreign intercourse. What foreigner ever decorated a little lapdog with a red-green-yellow-blue-and-purple crocheted collar, four or five inches wide?

Westerners have been charmed with the exquisite col-

ored photographs produced in Japan. It is strange, yet true, that the same artistic hand that produces these beautiful effects will also, by a slight change of tints, produce the most unnatural and spectral views. Yet the strangest thing is, not that he produces them, but that he does not seem conscious of the defect, for he will put them on sale in his own shop or send them to purchasers in America, without the slightest apparent hesitation. The constant care of the purchaser in selection and his insistence on having only truly artistic work are what keep the Japanese artist up to the standard.

If other evidence is needed of æsthetic defect in the still unoccidentalized Japanese taste let the doubter go to any popular second-grade Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple. Here unæsthetic objects and sights abound. Hideous idols, painted and unpainted, big and little, often decorated with soiled bibs; decaying to-rii; ruined subshrines; conglomerate piles of cast-off paraphernalia, consisting of broken idols, old lanterns, stones, etc., filthy towels at the holy-water basins, piously offered to the gods and piously used by hundreds of dusty pilgrims; equally filthy bell-ropes hung in front of the main shrines, pulled by ten thousand hands to call the attention of the deity; travel-stained hands, each of which has left its mark on the once beautiful enormous tasselled cord; ex-voto tufts of human hair; scores of pictures, where the few may be counted works of art while the rest are hideous beyond belief; frightful faces of tengu, with their long noses and menacing teeth, decorated with scores of spit-balls or even with mud-balls; these are some of the more conspicuous unæsthetic features of multitudes of popular shrines and temples. And none of these can be attributed to the debasing influence of Western art. And these inartistic features will be found accompanying scrupulous neatness in well-swept walks, new subshrines, floral decorations, and much that pleases the eye—a strange compound of the beautiful and the ugly. Truly the æsthetic development of the Japanese is curiously one-sided.

A survey of Japanese musical history leads to the conclusion that while the people are fairly developed in cer-

tain aspects of the æsthetics of music, such as rhythm, they are certainly undeveloped in other directions—in melody, for example, and in harmony. Their instrumental music is primitive and meager. They have no system of musical notation. The love of music, such as it is, is well-nigh universal. Their solo-vocal music, a semi-chanting in minors, has impressive elements; but these are due to the passionate outbursts and plaintive wails, rather than to the musically æsthetic character of the melodies. The universal twanging samisen, a species of guitar, accompanied by the shrill, hard voices of the geisha (singing girls), marks at once the universality of the love of music and the undeveloped quality of the musical taste, both vocal and instrumental. But in comparing the musical development of Japan with that of the West, we must not forget how recent is that of the former.

The conditions which have served to develop musical taste in the West have but recently come to Japan. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the nation to make much visible progress in the lines of Occidental music. But it has already done something. The popularity of brass bands, the wide introduction of organs, their manufacture in this land, their use in all public schools, the exclusive use of Occidental music in Christian churches, the ability of trained individuals in foreign vocal and instrumental music—all these facts go to show that in time we may expect great musical evolution in Japan. Those who doubt this on the ground of inherent race nature may be reminded of the evolution which has taken place among the Hawaiians during the past two generations. From being a race manifesting marked deficiency in music they have developed astonishing musical taste and ability. During a recent visit to these islands after an absence of twenty-seven years, I attended a Sunday-school exhibition, which was largely a musical contest; the voices were sweet and rich; and the difficulty of the part songs, easily carried through by children and adults, revealed a musical sense that surpasses any ordinary Sunday school of the United States or England with which I am acquainted.

The development of Japanese literature likewise conspicuously reflects the ruling ideas of the social order, and reveals the dependence of literary taste on the order. As in other aspects in Japanese aesthetic development, so in this do we see marked lack of balance. "It is wonderful what felicity of phrase, melody of versification, and true sentiment can be compressed within the narrow limits (of the Tanka). In their way nothing can be more perfect than some of these little poems."* The deficiencies of Japanese poetry have been remarked by the foreigners most competent to judge. The following general characterization from the volume just quoted merits attention.

"Narrow in its scope and resources, it is chiefly remarkable for its limitations—for what it has not, rather than what it has. In the first place there are no long poems. There is nothing which even remotely resembles an epic—no Iliad or Divina Commedia—not even a Nibelungen Lied or Chevy Chase. Indeed, narrative poems of any kind are short and very few, the only ones which I have met with being two or three ballads of a sentimental cast. Didactic, philosophical, political, and satirical poems are also conspicuously absent. The Japanese muse does not meddle with such subjects, and it is doubtful whether, if it did, the native Pegasus possesses sufficient staying power for them to be dealt with adequately. For dramatic poetry we have to wait until the fourteenth century. Even then there are no complete dramatic poems, but only dramas containing a certain poetical element.

"Japanese poetry is, in short, confined to lyrics, and what, for want of a better word, may be called epigrams. It is primarily an expression of emotion. We have amatory verse poems of longing for home and absent dear ones, praise of love and wine, elegies on the dead, laments over the uncertainty of life. A chief place is given to the seasons, the sound of purling streams, the snow of Mount Fuji, waves breaking on the beach, seaweed drifting to the shore, the song of birds, the hum of in-

* Aston's "Japanese Literature," p. 29.

sects, even the croaking of frogs, the leaping of trout in a mountain stream, the young shoots of fern in spring, the belling of deer in autumn, the red tints of the maple, the moon, flowers, rain, wind, mist; these are among the favorite subjects which the Japanese poets delight to dwell upon. If we add some courtly and patriotic effusions, a vast number of conceits more or less pretty, and a very few poems of a religious cast, the enumeration is tolerably complete. But, as Mr. Chamberlain has observed, there are curious omissions. War songs—strange to say—are almost wholly absent. Fighting and bloodshed are apparently not considered fit themes for poetry."*

The drama and the novel have both achieved considerable development, yet judged from Occidental standards, they are comparatively weak and insipid. They, of course, conspicuously reflect the characteristics of the social order to which they belong. Critics call repeated attention to the lack of sublimity in Japanese literature, and ascribe it to their inherent race nature. While the lack of sublimity in Japanese scenery may in fact account for the characteristic in question, still a more conclusive explanation would seem to be that in the older social order man, as such, was not known. The hidden glories of the soul, its temptations and struggles, its defects and victories, could not be the themes of a literature arising in a completely communal social order, even though it possessed individualism of the Buddhistic type.† These are the themes that give Western literature—poetic, dramatic, and narrative—its opportunity for sustained power and sublimity. They portray the inner life of the spirit.

The poverty of poetic form is another point of Western criticism. Mr. Aston has shown how this poverty is directly due to the phonetic characteristics of the language. Diversities of both rhyme and rhythm are practically excluded from Japanese poetry by the nature of the language. And this in turn has led to the "preference of the national genius for short poems." But language is manifestly the combined product of

* "Japanese Literature," p. 24.

† Cf. chapter xxxiii.

linguistic heredity and the social order, and can in no sense be ascribed to inherent race nature. Thus directly are social heredity and social order determinative of the literary characteristics and æsthetic tastes of a nation.

Even more manifestly may Japanese architectural development be traced to the social heredity derived from China and India. The needs of the developing internal civilization have determined its external manifestation. So far as Japanese differs from Chinese architecture, it may be attributed to Japan's isolation, to the different demands of her social order, to the difference of accessible building materials, and to the different social heredity handed down from prehistoric times. That the distinguishing characteristics of Japanese architecture are due to the inherent race nature cannot for a moment be admitted.

We conclude that the Japanese are not possessed of a unique and inherent æsthetic taste. In some respects they are as certainly ahead of the Occidental as they are behind him in other respects. But this, too, is a matter of social development and social heredity, rather than of inherent race character, of brain structure. If æsthetic nature were a matter of inherited brain structure, it would be impossible to account for rapid fluctuations in æsthetic judgment, for the great inequality of æsthetic development in the different departments of life, or for the ease of acquiring the æsthetic development of alien races.*

*Gustave Le Bon maintains, in his brilliant, but sophistical, work on "The Psychology of Peoples," that the "soul of a race" unalterably determines even its art. He states that a Hindu artist, in copying an European model several times, gradually eliminates the European characteristics, so that, "the second or third copy . . . will have become exclusively Hindu." His entire argument is of this nature; I must confess that I do not in the least feel its force. The reason the Hindu artist transforms a Western picture in copying it is because he has been trained in Hindu art, not because he is a Hindu physiologically. If that same Hindu artist, taken in infancy to Europe and raised as a European and trained in European art, should still persist in replacing European by Hindu art characteristics, then the argument would have some force, and his contention that the "soul of races" can be modified only by intermarriage of races would seem more reasonable.

XVI

MEMORY—IMITATION

THE differences which separate the Oriental from the Occidental mind are infinitesimal as compared with the likenesses which unite them. This is a fact that needs to be emphasized, for many writers on Japan seem to ignore it. They marvel at the differences. The real marvel is that the differences are so few and so superficial. The Japanese are a race whose ancestors were separated from their early home nearly three thousand years ago; during this period they have been absolutely prevented from intermarriage with the parent stock. Furthermore, that original stock was not the Indo-European race. And no one has ventured to suggest how long before the migration of the ancestors of the Japanese to Japan their ancestors parted from those who finally became the progenitors of modern Occidental peoples. For thousands of years, certainly, the Japanese and Anglo-Saxon races have had no ancestry in common. Yet so similar is the entire structure and working of their minds that the psychological text-books of the Anglo-Saxon are adopted and perfectly understood by competent psychological students among the Japanese. I once asked a professor of psychology in the Matsuyama Normal School if he had no difficulty in teaching his classes the psychological system of Anglo-Saxon thinkers, if there were not peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon mind which a Japanese could not understand, and if there were not psychological phenomena of the Japanese mind which were ignored in Anglo-Saxon psychological text-books. The very questions surprised him; to each he gave a negative reply. The mental differences that characterize races so dissimilar as the Japanese and the Anglo-Saxon, I venture