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Poetry.

THE OLD HOME.

BY WILL WALLACE HARNEY.

An out-door quiet held the earth
Beneath the winter moon,
The cricket chirped in cozy mirth,
And the kettle crooned, upon the hearth,
A sweet, old-fashioned tune.

The old clock ticked, a drowsy race,
With the clicking of the cricket,
And red coals in the chimney-place
Peeped out, with many a rosy face,
Like berries in a thicket.

The crane's arm empty, stuck out stiff,
And tinware on the shelves
Twinkled and winked at every gliff,
In the flickering fire-light, as if
They whispered to themselves.

The good dame, in her ruffled cap,
Counted her stitches slowly,
And the old man, with full many a gap,
Read from the Big Book on his lap,
The good words, wise and holy.

The old clock clicked; the old man read,
His deep voice pausing, lowering;
The good wife nodded, dropped her head—
The lids of both were heavy as lead—
They were sound asleep and snoring.

Oh, hale old couple! sweet each dream,
While—all the milk-pans tilting—
Puss paints her whiskers in the cream,
Till John and the belated team
Bring Maggie from the quilting.

May Time, I pray, when failing years
Make thin my voice and thrapple,
Find my last days of life like theirs,
As sweet with children's love and prayers,
And like a winter apple.

—*Scribner's for December.*

Miscellany.

From the Home Journal.

Life in Japan.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM E. GRIFFIS.

The longest unbroken stretch of water statedly traversed by the keel of steamer or sailing vessel lies between California and Japan. The floating city which leaves its dock in San Francisco at noon on the first day of each month pulses across four thousand miles of ocean, from which rises no island, harbor, or reef. Nothing amid all the crowding triumphs of the genius and power of man so impresses the reflecting mind as the thought of that mighty ark, which, by the magnet and the stars, is guided in safety to the desired haven. Without a Noah, without dove or olive leaf, freighted with bird, beast, and fish, and often with thirteen hundred human souls, over a flood of waters that cover a world beneath, alone for weeks, that ark floats on, at the bidding of the master.

Twenty-seven days in the solitudes of the sea seem long to the boy of this decade, who crosses the Atlantic's thousand leagues in nine days, and the New World in a week. Even to the staid adult, whose stomach is seaworthy, whose appetite is like a whetted saw, who meets a host of genial fellow birds of passage and finds officers who will answer questions, who discovers new and reliable books in the ship's library, and who delights in the study of steerage ethnology, yearns in his secret soul for the sight of land again. Even the ocean scenery, though, like God's mercies, new every morning and fresh every evening, palls on the eye, and loses its glory before the thoughts of the crowded city in which comforts cluster and pleasures bloom. The waves that daily cradle the infant sun and pillow his dying splendor, and the effulgence of the cavernous sunsets, would be gladly exchanged for a patch of farm or the sober glory of a wide-spreading oak. Often, indeed, the monotony of the voyage is relieved by meeting one of the company's steamers. If the weather be fair, the pillar of cloud, or the long thin scarf of black smoke afar off, is the harbinger of the coming ship. The exchange of newspapers and the sending homeward of letters are accomplished, to the intense delight of passengers jaded with *ennui;* but the meeting of steamers in mid-ocean is, strange to say, a matter of dislike to a certain class of persons, who, in spite of all preventive precautions, keep up their existence. We refer to the "stow-aways," one or two of whom are found on nearly every steamer that leaves the shores of either continent. They sneak on board the big ship while in port, and are driven from their lair, when at sea, by hunger. When first discovered, the inquisitor of the ship—the purser—uses all his skill to exort the full passage money If not forthcoming, the "stowaway" is consigned to purgatory—*i. e.*, the fire room, and compelled to pass coal and feed the fires. This process refines his feelings so far that the "dross" is produced, if on the victim's person. If he refuses to do duty, his fare being still unpaid, he is put in irons, but by passing through purgatory he is "saved" from further punishment and reaches the paradise of *terra firma*, "yet so as by fire."

All these incidents and accidents of sea life cease to haae any importance after the oracle at the head of the table has announced that "we shall sight Cape King at daybreak tomorrow." We try to sleep well during our last night on the water; but sleep, so often won and long embraced thus far, becomes fickle and flies our eyelids. With joyful sleeplessness our thoughts are busy with the morrow, until at last, in the wee morning hours, repenting sleep comes to seal our eyelids.

We awake early, and from out our state-room window behold the eye-gladdening land within rifle-shot. Hills, crested with timber, line the bay, and the beaches are dotted with thatched huts and white storehouses. Fisherman's boats, manned and moving over the bay, are near enough for us to distinguish their occupants. Tall, muscular men, with skin of a dirty copper color, in long, loose dress, their mid-scalps shaven, and the projecting cue or top-knot, of the percussion gun-hammer style, are the first natives of Japan whom we see at home. Though different in dress, condition, and as the barber left them, from their gay fellow-countrymen who spend plenty of money and study hard in the United States, they, nevertheless, exactly resemble their brethren in physiognomy and general appearance.

The dayspring in the east sifts enough of suggestive light over the land to entice us into the belief that this island is one of the fairest on earth—a belief which a residence of years has ripened into an article of faith. To the right lie the two mountainous provinces of Awa and Kadzusa, with their numerous serrated peaks and valleys which may be beautiful, though now they sleep. To the left is the village of Uraga, opposite which Commodore Perry anchored with his whole squadron of steamers, on the seventh of July, 1853. Remaining eight days at this place he was accorded what he first demanded—an interview with, and the reception of President Fillmore's letter by, an officer of the highest rank. After the ceremony, he gave the place the name of Reception Bay, which it still retains. Now we pass Perry Island, Webster Isle, and, on the opposite side, Cape Saratoga We must not forget, mournful though the thought be, that hereabout, beneath us, perhaps under our keel, lies the United States war steamer *Oneida*, which was run into and sunk by the British mail steamer *Bombay*, in the winter of 1869. This is sad, but the sequel is disgraceful. Down under the fathoms the *Oneida* has lain, thus far undisturbed, a rich and grateful government having failed to trouble itself to raise the ship or do honor to the dead. A few months ago the hulk was put up at auction and sold, with certain conditions, to a Japanese, for fifteen hundred dollars. This is the one sad thought that casts its shadow over the otherwise profound memories of which the Gulf of Yedo is so suggestive to Americans. The prominent geographical points in the bay echo familiar American names, which later geographers and a cosmopolitan community have ratified, and which commemorate American genius, skill, and bloodless victory

This ship moves on, and the panoramic landscape unfolds before us. In the background of undulating plains, under high and close cultivation, and spotted with villages, rise the crumbled backs of many ranges of mountains; while afar off, yet brought delusively near by the clear air sits the queenly mountain in her robes of snow, already wearing the morning's crown of light, and her forehead gilded by the first ray of the yet unrisen sun. Beyond her, in the purple air, still glitter the jewel stars, while her own bosom trembles through many changes of color. Far out at sea, long before land is decided, and from a land area of thirteen provinces, the peerless cone is seen and loved. Perhaps no view is so perfect, so impressive for a life-time, so well fitted to inspire that intense appreciation of nature's masterpieces, whose glory and freshness we can feel intensely but once, as is the view of Fuji from an incoming steamer. From vast outspread base, through mighty curves, sweeping past snow, and up to its summit, the mountain is visible in queenly solitude and fulness of beauty. From serene and ancient Fuji we turn to behold the bustling upstart metropolis of the foreigners in Japan as it appears in full daylight. Passing Mississippi Bay and Treaty Point, we arrive in front of what was once a little fishing village. We count the craft that lie anchored in the harbor. From thirty to fifty are usually in port. Steamers from Hakodate, Shanghae, and Hong Kong, and the regular mail steamers from Marseilles and Southampton lie at their buoys. Here are war frigates or iron-clads, from which fly the British, French, Japanese, German or American flags. Coal hulks, store ships, and all the usual evidences of an old harbor are discovered all around us. The town itself seems compactly built of low houses, with tiled roofs. They are usually two-storied, though many are, in the language of the East "bungalows," or one-storied dwellings. The foreign settlement seems to be arranged on a plain about a mile square. The Japanese town spreads out another mile more so to the right. Beyond the plains is a sort of semi-circle of hills, called "the bluff." It is covered with scores of handsome villas and dwelling houses of all sizes and varieties of architecture. To the left the bluff run abruptly into the sea. To the right it sweeps away to the southwest.—In local parlance the various parts of Yokohama are distinguished as the "Bluff," the "Settlement," and the "Native" or "Japanese" town. Along the waterfront of the settlement run a fine, wide, well-paved street, called the "Bund" with a sea wall on the water side. Private dwelling, gardens and hotels adore it, facing the water. There are as yet no docks for the shipping, but there is the English and the French "hatoba." The former consists of a stone breakwater or piers rising twelve feet or so out of the water, enclosing a irregular quadrangle, with a narrow entrance at one corner.—The land-side of the English hatoba is furnished with steps, and a score or more of boats can discharge their passengers at once. The French hatoba consists of two parallel piers of stone projecting out into the bay. The building of most imposing ugliness from the sea view is the British Consulate, and near by it is the American. The Japanese Sai Ban Sho, or Court House, is larger than either of the consulate building, and much handsomer. At the other extremely of the settlement toward the bluff, is the French Camp, and near by it the English. Three hundred French soldiers guard as many French civilians resident in Japan. Three hundred English marines are in camp at Yokohama, they having relieved the Tenth British foot; the same Tenth that served their king on Bunker Hill. A rapid glance, with an old Yokohama resident to help us, and we distinguished the French Consulate, the English and American Legations, and many other prominent buildings.

The engines stop, and the great ship lies motionless at her buoy. Instantly the crowd of boats which have waited, like hounds in the leash, shoot toward the stern ports and gangway, and the steamer becomes walled in. First of all, the United States mail-boat, propelled by six native scullers, is flying swiftly shoreward to satisfy the eager souls of the elect, with its precious freight Friends throng on board to meet friends. Englishmen step on deck to find out whether there is to be war with Russia, and the Muscovites to inquire whether England will fight. Fancy creatures in velvet and diamonds, with gold on their fingers, and brass in their faces, hasten to see whether any of their guild have arrived from San Francisco.

Leaving deck and cabin, we visit the steerage. The coal lighters are crowded with dirty coollies. They impress us as being the lowest of their class. Their clothing is exceedingly scanty. An American lady with good eyesight supposed them to be clad in very tight leather-colored garments. On second sight, wondering at the perfect fit of the dress, she found it to be the only clothing which mother nature provides for her children. The proprietors of the native boats have entered the ports, and are driving a brisk trade in oranges and various articles of diet, precious only to Asiatics. Huge dried persimmons, which, though shrunken, are four or five inches long, and sak, the rice-beer of the country, are very saleable. A squad of the Chinese so numerous in Yokohama, are busy in furnishing small change to those who wish to go ashore. Japanese tempos, iron and copper cash are exchanged for American dimes, greenbacks, and Mexicans.

With the kindly aid of a friend we prepare to go ashore. Safely seated in one of the clean unpainted boats, in which we detect no iron, but only here and there a cleet of copper, we enjoy the glorious beauty of the situation. In the stern stand the two sculls, who make their keel glide over the waves as swiftly as a Venetian gondola shoots under and out from the Rialto.

Sculling is the method invariably in use among the Japanese. The long scull consists of two pieces tied together. On the handle is a pin, on which a rope is slipped so that the scull is held down to a uniform height while being worked. The blade rests near where it joins the stock, on an outrigged pivot. The sweep of the stock at the hand end, is nearly two feet. The sculler planting his left foot on an inclined board, sways his arms and body at right angles to the boat, singing meanwhile one of his own songs, in his own way. We soon skim over a half mile of the blue water, and darting within the stone piers, land on the hatoba, and are in Japan.

The Custom House and the native officials detain us but a few moments. Passing out the gate, we receive our first invitation to part with some small change from three fat little urchins in curious dress, with lion's head and feathers for a cap, and with red streamers hanging down their backs. They run before us and perform all kinds of astonishing tricks, such as carrying their head beneath their feet, making a ball of themselves, and trundling along, etc. By our financial dealings with these little street-tumblers we learn that "shinjo" means "gift," and "arigatto" means "thank you," which is the beginning of our vocabulary in Japanese.

The fine wide streets of Yokohama are well paved and curbed. The hard white stone and concrete pavements are able to resist for years the rutting action of the sharp edged wheels of the native carts. These wheels are ingeniously constructed, and their fellows are mortised in segments. They need no tires and have none. They are propelled by four powerful fellows, who work in pairs. The foremost pair push with hands and thighs the front cross-bar, behind which they stand. The other pair supply the *vis a tergo*, applying their shoulders to a beam which juts out obliquely from beneath and behind the cart. The street cries in every country attract first the new-comer's ears, and the cry of these cart coolies in Yokohama is one of the most peculiar sounds in or out of Japan. While the two men in the rear save their wind and vocal force, the two foremost coolies utter alternately and incessantly a coarse deep gutteral cry, which, if spelling were possible, would be written hai! huida! ho! ho! hai! huida! wa! ho! ho! huidah! etc. We were, at first hearing, under the impression that the poor wretches were suffering a grevious colic, and a benevolent inclination seized us to buy a few bottles of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup and distribute them on the spot. On being told, however, that nothing was the matter with the men, it being their custom to yell in this manner, we abandoned our intention.

Rows of iron lamp-posts, with lanterns and burners trimed and in cleanly readiness, tell of well lighted streets at night. Along the avenue, on which stand the British and American Consulates on one side, and the Japanese court house, bonded warehouses, and police station on the other, are sidewalks, which, along several blocks, are thickly planted, in a breadth of ten feet or more, with evergreen and flowers. Among these we see the camellias in full bloom. The main street crosses this avenue at right angles, extending from the Japanese town to the canal at the foot of the bluff. The sidewalks on it are narrow, but the street pavements are so hard and are kept so clean, that it is not unpleasant to walk in the street even in wet weather. All the streets in the foreign settlement are paved, curbed, drained, and now, in 1874, lighted with gas. Main street is the showiest of all—the Broadway of the "New York of Japan" Here we pass fine stone-fronted stores, banks, hotels and restaurants.—The magnificent show windows and abundance of plate glass suggest handsome variety and solid wealth within. These outside displays are in most cases, but fair indexes of the varied articles of merchandize within which are obtainable at very fair prices. Nothing eatable, drinkable or wearable, seems to be lacking to suit the tastes or wishes of an ordinary man, beast or angel; though we have heard that the entire bevy of Miss Flora McFlimsey's cousins in Yokohama assert most strenuously that there is "nothing to wear" at any time. Nevertheless to man or beast, the abundance and variety of feminine paraphanelia visible in one of the shops in which angelic robes are sold is simply wonderful; and one notices that the visit. of the angels to this place are neither few nor far between. Craftsmen in the finer arts also get their wealth in Yokohama. Several jewellers display tempting wares and ply a brisk trade—Young Japan wears a watch now-a-days, and thousands are sold yearly in Yokohama. Barber's poles salute us on several streets, and one may be shaved in French, English, or Japanese.

Photographic establishments tempt our eyes and purse with tasteful albums of Japanese costume and scenery. First-class eating saloons await their crowds at the hungry hour. The several auction rooms seem to be well filled with native and foreign purheasers. Confectioners display their bait for the palate. Newspaper offices greet us with their signs, and lawyers' and doctors' and dentists' shingles seem to be sufficiently plentiful. Carriages and "traps" add to the bustle; and several knots of Japanese farmers, pilgrims and new-comers from the provinces, staring surprisingly at the sights they have long heard of, but which they now for the first time behold, are met as we pass up the street. French Catholic or Russian Greek priests in their cassocks, nuns in their black robes, well-dressed Chinese, Jews from every nation under heaven, French soldiers in blue, British marines in red coats, and the talkers in a score of different languages, are met with and help to give the town its cosmopolitan character. Main street, however, is only the street of shops, shopkeepers, and the usual vulgar herd.

Let us turn into the street of "Hongs" and "merchants." Be it known that in Yokohama, and the Eastern ports generally, the distinction between a merchant and a shop-keeper is dire and radical. With us lay folk outside of the trading world, the difference is small and not always preceptible, a mole hill at the least; but in these Eastern ports a great gulf is fixed, socially and commercially, between the two castes, and the difference is mountainous With us, a shopkeeper is a man and a brother; in Yokohama, in the eye of the clubs, and with the elect of wealth, fashion, and the professions, he is but a heathen and a publican. Advertising, the use of a sign-board, and such like improprieties, are evidences of low caste, and consign the offender to the outer darkness, far away from happy club men and select visitors. This relic of English caste traditions, rank, and class worship, is not so strong now as formerly, but is sufficiently potent to cause many a bitter pang and many hear-burnings to those who first experience it in their new residence in the East.

The street in which the "Hongs" or large business establishments are situated is rather gloomy, when compared with the lively Main street, Most of the buildings are of stone and many of them are fire-proof "godowns," or storehouses. From the windows of the "tea-firing godowns" issue the fragrant aroma of the new crop of tea, which is being "fired" or dried in deep tin basins, over charcoal fires, by native girls and women, preparatory to packing and export. most of the largest and wealthiest business houses are owned and managed by those who were among the first comers to Japan. Many of the "hongs" are branches of houses in China, or they themselves have agencies at Nagaski, Hiogo, and ports in China. From five to twenty young men form their clerical staff, backed by a small army of native porters. Coolies, packers, boatmen, etc. These large firms control nearly all the export trade of Yokohama, and, indeed, of Japan. The tea, silk, copper, rice, etc., is brought from all parts of the country, though chiefly from the west and north, and is disposed of by the native merchants through brokers and "compradores." In most cases the native producer, or even the broker, never sees the foreigner with whom he deals. The most important man in many foreign firms, the power behind and before the throne, is the "compradore." This superior being is a Chinaman, especially with the help of the written Chinese character, to deal with the Japanese merchant, producer, or broker. He is the provider and paymaster of the firm in its dealings with the natives. He arranges, by and with the advice of the merchant, the purchase, sale, and delivery of merchandise. He hires and pays the Japanese *employes*, and being the trusted man, is a creature of imposing pretensions, and a quasi-partner of the firm. His facilities, opportuities, and never-cloyed desire for "squeezes" from his Japanese clients are equally abundant, and he lives up to his privileges. Various shifts have been made use of by the Japanese merchants to depose this obnoxious middle-man from his position, and even to eliminate him entirely from mercantile transactions. A bold attempt of this kind was lately made by the plucky Governor of Yokohama, Oye Takejbut. As the manner of the attempt was technically illegal, it failed, and matters still remain as they were before.

This aristocratic and highly antiquated form of doing business, in which the merchant practically holds himself aloof from his customers, is an inheritance from the foreign merchants in the ports of China. Ignorant of the language of that country, trusting their affairs to a "compradore" who spoke pigeon-English, they lived and grew rich, without troubling themselves to learn the language of the pigtails around them. Few of the merchants in Japan, to their discredit let it be said, have seriously endeavored to master the speech of their producers, and, being ignorant of it, the "compradore" is, in such a state of things, a necessary evil. This old-fogy method of doing business must in time give way before the enterprise and energy of the younger firms, who refuse to employ "compradores," and the members of which are beginning to acquire the language of the people with whom they deal. There might have been excuses to the first-comers for not learning a language for the acquisition of which no teachers or apparatus at that time existed; but at the present, thanks to American missionaries and the gentlemen of the English civil service, an excellent apparatus of grammars, dictionaries, and phrase-books exist.

The three great steamship companies at present in Yonkohama are the pacific Mail Steamship Company, the English Peninsular and Oriantial Navagation Company, and the French Messageries Maritime Paquet Postes Francais. The Ocean Steamship Company has also an agency here. Two native lines of mail steamers also make Yokohama their terminus. The coming orthodox bridal tour and round-the-world trip will soon be made *via* Japan first, then Asia, Europe, and America. Already the circum-mundane tourists have become so frequent and temporarily numerous in Yokohama as to be recognized as a distinct class. In the easy language of the port they are called "globe-trotters," Webster's ponderous "mundivagent" not having as yet obtained currency.

The most interesting portion of Yonkohama, alike to the new comer and the old resident, is the Bluff. Coming to a port opened primarily for trading purposes only, one expects to find shops and storehouses, but few anticipate seeing such dwellings and homes as are to be found on the bluff. In the afternoon, when the business of the day is over, and the high, grand and mighty event of the day, the dinner, has not yet been consumated, the visitor on the bluff may expect to see very fine speciments of horseflesh, good turnouts, and plenty of pedestrian and equestrian humanity out for fresh air. The trim dooryards, lawns, gardens, fences and hedges help to make a picture of unexpected beauty. The villas and dwellings are not high, being bungalows of one story, or houses of two. Though not remarkable as architectural triumphs, they are picturesque without, and full of comfort within. Added to home attractions is the ever present lovely scenery of the bay, the distant mountains, the peerless Fuji, and the smiling valleys. Nearly all the professional, and many of the business men live on the bluff, and, whether from the natural altitude, the inspiring freshness of the scenery, or otherwise, the bluff dwellers are apt to consider themselves of a slightly higher social order than the inhabitants of the plain. The bluff spreads over an irregular tangle, and its surface is rather undulating Many of the dwellings are snugly embosomed amid groves, or on the slopes and in the hollows, but most of them crown its spurs and ridges in commanding positions. The legations of the Treaty Powers are situated in especially choice spots. Strange to say, the foreign diplomatic representatives, instead of residing in Tokio, (Yedo) the capital, live at Yokohama, preferring society to the doubtful charms of the Japanese capital. Besides the legations are the fine American hospital, the General and British hospitals, and the public gardens. On summer evenings one of the bands from the flag-ships stationed in the harbor plays in these gardens; while flower, beast and bird shows, and various sports and amusements, fireworks, etc., are furnished by the most indefatigable proprietor that ever catered to public taste. Beyond the "foreign concession" of land, that is, outside the limits of foreign dwellings, is the race-course, an ample space of ground, levelled, fenced, and furnished with buildings and spectators' stands. The races are held during three days in spring and autumn, and an incredible amount of excitement is got up over oriental horseflesh.