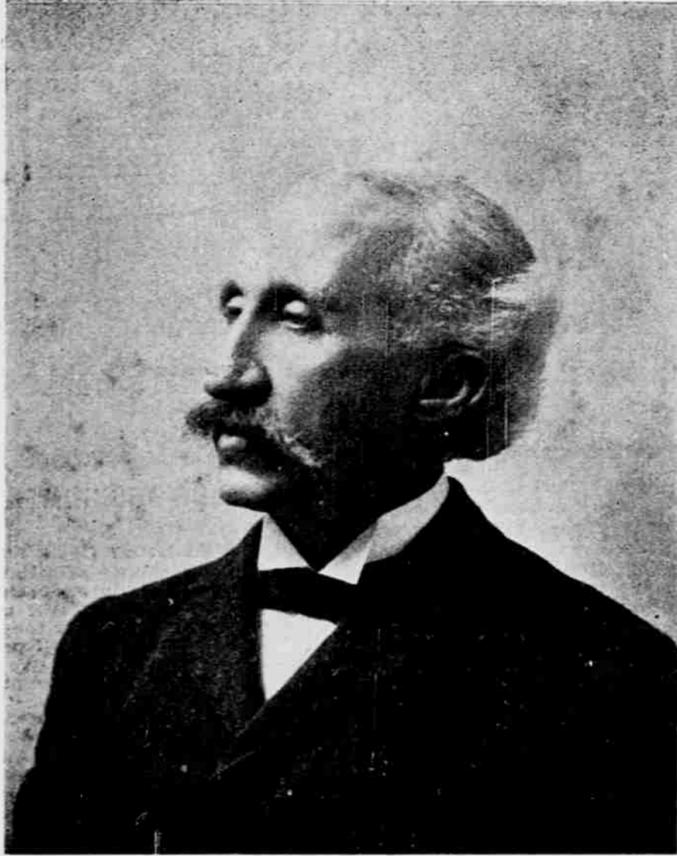


The Japanese in Hawaii

By MR. M. M. SCOTT.



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ing of or about. They have usually been simple agricultural workers on a very small scale, or some of them may have been fishermen. Foreign methods, foreign ways, foreign houses, even the foreigner himself, are strange and mysterious to them.

When these immigrants arrive at their destination on the plantations of Hawaii, all things are strange to them. Such training and experience as they have had at home are of little avail here. Kind of work, climate, food and the method of preparing it, are alike mysterious. What wonder, then, that at least in the beginning little troubles and misunderstandings should have occurred. The gratifying wonder is that they were so few and so trivial. It speaks well for the wonderful adaptability of these simple people, and for the good sense and consideration of their employers that many more, and far graver difficulties have not arisen. With one or two notable exceptions, no serious asperities of any kind have marred the intercourse between Japan and this Territory, in its monarchical, republican or territorial form. This happy condition of affairs has been largely owing to the firm but conciliatory temper and action of Japan's trained consuls in Hawaii, as well as to the good sense and considerate treatment of all questions of difference.

The first immigrants, as is well known, came here under contract, in accordance with the labor convention entered into by the parties of Japan and Hawaii. It finally resulted in the abandonment of the harshest features of the contract system—to-wit: the arrest of and imprisonment of laborers for desertion of service. This feature was voluntarily given up by the planters because it is viewed with disapprobation by the Japanese government, and was disagreeable and distasteful to the planters themselves.

From the beginning of the coming of the Japanese, honest efforts were made to secure the best class of agricultural laborers. They came in large numbers, sometimes as many as 1200 in one ship. Among these large numbers, and in the hurry of one ship's following another in rapid succession, sometimes the incompetent, the vicious and the lewd came along, smuggling themselves in some way or other. This class of persons, however, has been comparatively few, and, in the main, the immigrants have given great and deserved satisfaction. Within the time since the passage of the organic act, comparatively few laborers have come to the islands, and many have gone away; thus the balance being in favor of those who return.

THE JAPANESE AS LABORERS ON PLANTATIONS.

Primarily, as stated in the foregoing, the Japanese came here to labor on the plantations. Long before annexation, under the provisional government, Chinese immigration was discouraged, even prohibited. This was largely owing to the desire to conform to the laws of the United States in regard to Chinese immigration in order to make a point in favor of annexation. Perhaps also subsidiary to this, but of considerable importance, was the fact that the Japanese do not excite the antipathy of the skilled occupations as the Chinese do. Why this is so, no one can tell. It is perhaps personal and therefore inapplicable.

The planters, therefore, being left without an adequate supply of laborers, the Japanese were the best and most available; and their numbers continued to increase on the plantations until, at present, perhaps nearly or quite two-thirds of the unskilled labor there are Japanese. Upon the whole, they, perhaps, give greater satisfaction than any other laborers. At a planters' meeting two or three years ago, about three-fourths of those present gave their preference for Japanese laborers over all others.

Japanese farm laborers possess many traits of character, physical and mental, that make them admirably suited to the kind of work done on cane plantations. They are low of stature and strong of body. It is, perhaps, within limits to say that their average height is not over 5 feet, 2 or 3 inches. For their height, they are broad and deep chested and of unequalled symmetry and muscular power. In stripping, cutting, and loading cane, they are closer to their work than taller and less muscular men. In stooping to lift loads, the arc described is not so large, the radius less; thus giving them comparatively greater power and quicker movement than other and taller men. Parenthetically, I may say that I believe the Japanese to be the strongest and the most muscular of all races of men in proportion to height. Then, even though of the poorest peasantry, they are possessed of quick and flexible intelligence. They have, in a rudimentary form, considerable mechanical ingenuity. In consequence of their manipulative power they make excellent workers for inside mill work, especially around centrifugals.

The one feature I hear complained of, most detrimental to their efficiency as plantation laborers and as household servants, is a tendency to instability of character. Sudden notions to change places, their employers say, is characteristic of them. There is no doubt,

MORE THAN one-third of the population of the Hawaiian Territory are Japanese. The statistics of the last census are not yet available for comparison of the various races in this composite Territory, but enough is known from other sources to sustain the foregoing conclusion as to their comparative predominance in numbers.

Moreover, another fact of great significance is that a vast majority is composed of adult males in the prime of life. There are few very old or very young men among them, and comparatively few women and children. Again the statistics of the last census fall us for exact comparison.

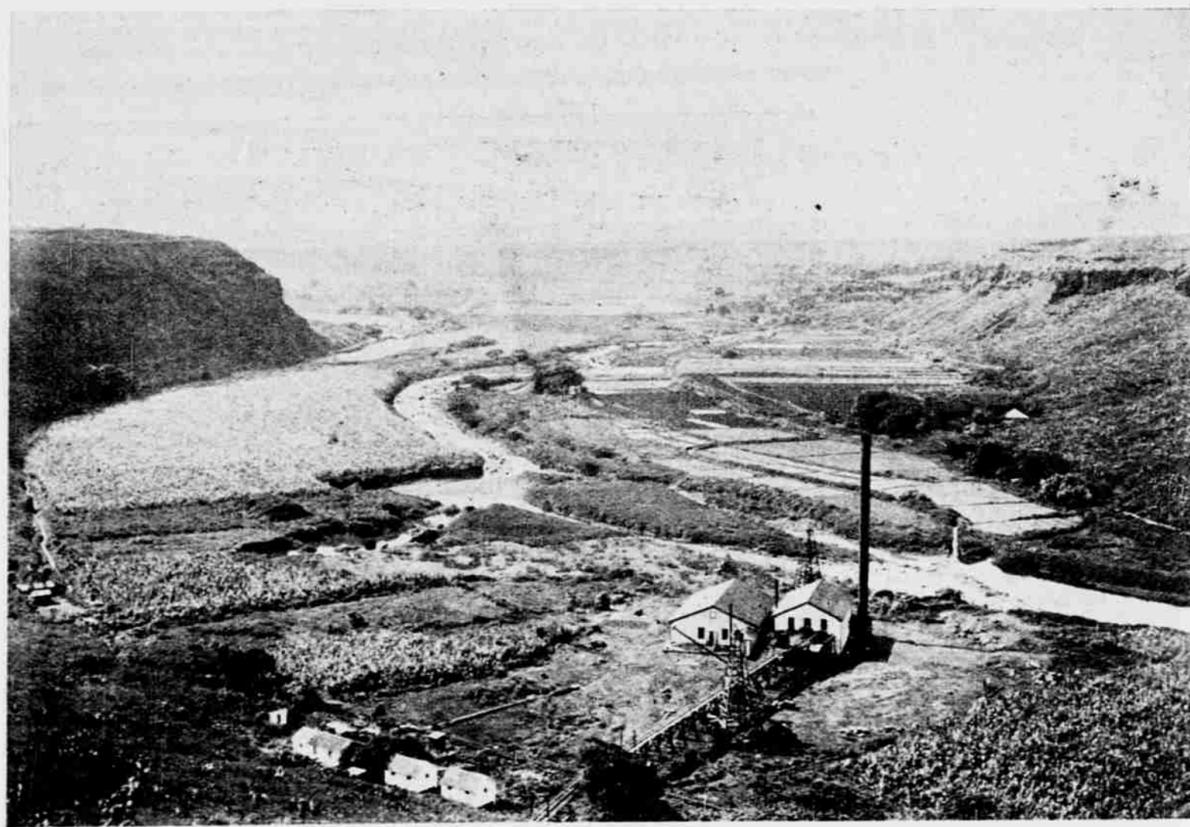
This predominance in numbers of men over women and children is a natural result of the conditions. The Japanese were induced to come to Hawaii originally to be laborers on the plantations. Old men and very young men or boys were not wanted; and many, indeed, almost all of the married men left their wives and children in Japan. Then many of the younger men were unmarried. This state of affairs—so many single men—though, perhaps, of economic advantage to the planters was and is a source of regret to many of the most thoughtful and philanthropic of their number. Wife and children are "hostages to fortune"—as true of the humble Japanese agricultural laborer as of his European brother.

Yet, how could it be otherwise? They came to Hawaii as all people, from the troglodytes to the New Englanders who go west to benefit their material, their financial condition in life.

As elsewhere, and with other races, they, so soon as they made their "pile," were going "home" to live out a happy old age, free from harrassing penury. It is most likely, as with other migrations and other races, their desires will fail of fulfillment in many cases and very many will make their permanent homes here; this will be especially so with the young and with those born here. It cannot be otherwise than that the large element of Japanese entering into the various ramifications of Hawaiian life must be productive of profound influence. It has already been so, and will probably continue with increased acceleration as they become more incorporated into our industrial, commercial and social body.

For the better understanding of those not knowing the facts concerning Japanese emigration, a few words of explanation may be of importance.

Nearly all the immigrants coming to these islands are from the remote provinces of the Japanese Empire. They are the simplest and most rustic of the population. The new and surging life of the Japanese renaissance has scarcely touched them. Probably until they reach their port of departure, usually Kobe, New Japan is to them almost a sealed book. The new mechanical industries are to them a world of wonders. Production of any kind on a large and co-operative plan, they know nothing of or about.



Two Pumping Stations on the McBryde Plantation in Hanapepe Valley. Combined capacity, 20,000,000 gallons in 24 hours. Lift 250 and 380 feet respectively. The one in the distance is a Worthington, the other, a Risdon, both triple expansion. These pumps have been used for irrigation this year three months, the balance of the time the reservoirs and mountain streams have been sufficient. To the right of the valley are the cane fields of the Makaweli Plantation. To the left come those of McBryde. The cane and land in the valley to the left of the Hanapepe River is owned by the McBryde Plantation.