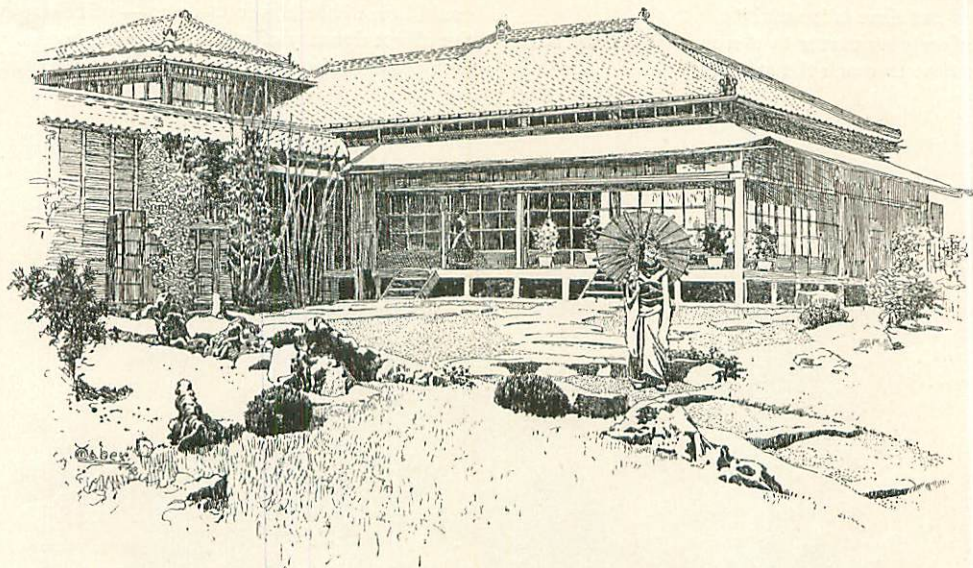


SEEING THE REAL MIKADO.

BY ARTHUR L. SHUMWAY.



PRESENT IMPERIAL RESIDENCE, TOKIO.

“OHIO!”* exclaimed a familiar voice.

I glanced up from the letter which I was engaged in writing as I sat upon the front veranda of the Windsor House, one of the principal foreign hotels, situated on the “bund” in the Port of Yokohama. The voice was that of a young Englishman whose acquaintance I had made on board the steamer that carried me from the shores of Uncle Sam’s domain to the Land of the Rising Sun. Returning by way of the United States from England, whither he had gone on the business of the large Yokohama mercantile house with which his father was connected, he had happened to take at San Francisco the steamer upon which I had engaged passage. The acquaintance thus begun ripened to a fast friendship after our arrival at Yokohama. His home was on “The Bluff,” the foreign residence portion of Yokohama; and, although making the hotel my nominal headquarters, I was very frequently his guest at his table and by his fireside. Whenever I made a tour of exploration through the town, I called first at the business house where he was employed, to see whether he could accompany me. Almost invariably he man-

aged to arrange his work so that he could go with me. With his help I could better understand the significance of the strange things I saw, and draw truer conclusions from the experiences which fell to my lot. On this occasion he had taken the trouble to come for me to the hotel.

“Ohio,” I said, returning the Japanese salutation, and rising to receive him.

“What are you doing here at this hour?” he inquired.

“Writing some letters for to-morrow’s mail,” I replied. “What else should I be doing?”

“You should be on your way with me to the railway station,” he answered.

“What is the attraction there?” I asked.

“The arrival of the great ‘Tenshisama’ from Tokio by special train,” was the reply.

“What! — the Mikado?”

“Even he, the son of heaven; the *nin-wō*, or king of men; the *kōtei*, or august ruler.”

“What brings him here?”

“Had you forgotten that this is the first day of the Yokohama races? The Mikado perhaps has come to see the races.”

* Good-morning.

"When does the imperial train arrive?"

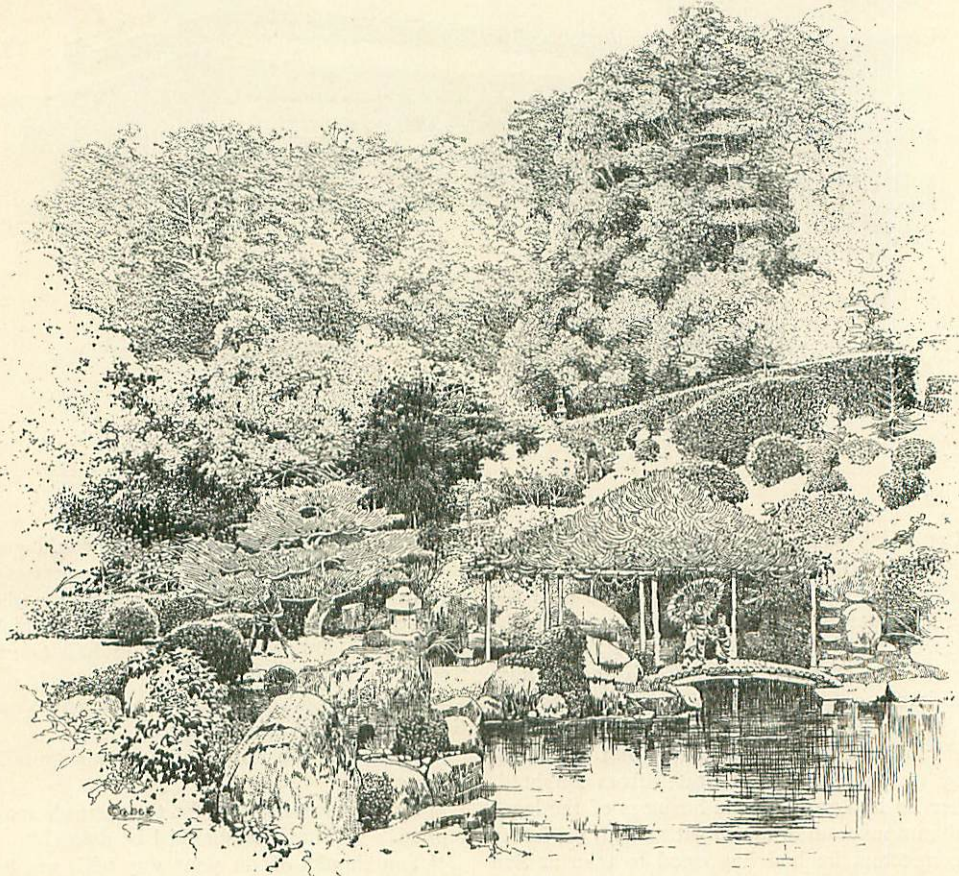
"It is due here at eleven o'clock, and it will arrive exactly on time. It leaves Tokio at 10:15. That allows three-quarters of an hour for the run of eighteen miles, an average speed of twenty-four miles an hour without stops. You will perceive that the Emperor of Japan is n't so ambitious to travel at great speed as most sovereigns are supposed to be."

"What time is it now?"

"Nearly a quarter to eleven. We shall hardly have time to reach the station."

all sorts of questions about the Oriental monarch we were about to see,—just as I always availed myself of the opportunity to draw upon his inexhaustible fund of general information regarding the island, when we were going about together.

"The present Mikado's name is Mutsuhito," he said. "The name may be translated 'benevolent man.' He is the one hundred and twenty-third emperor in the imperial line, and boasts—or could boast if he chose to do so—of belonging to the oldest dynasty of monarchs in the world. The first emperor in this line was a contemporary of



VIEW OF FUKIAGE GARDENS, TOKIO.

"I will go, of course. It would never do to miss seeing the Mikado, when there is such an opportunity."

"Certainly it would not. Besides, there is no haste about finishing your letters. The morning paper says that the O. and O. mail-steamer is still in Hong Kong and will arrive here three days late."

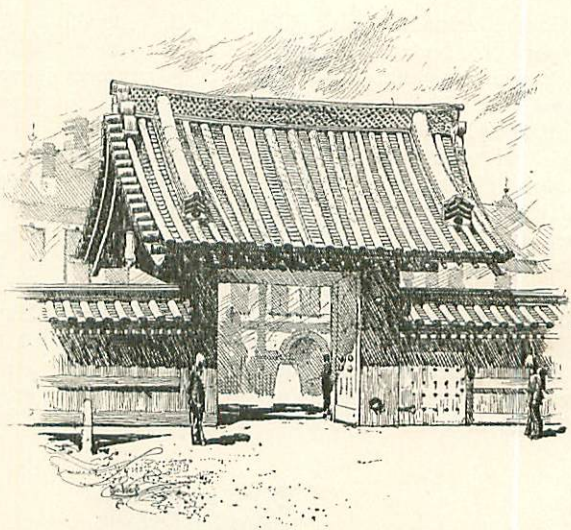
So we started, post-haste, for the railway station. On the way I peppered my companion with

Nebuchadnezzar,—think of it! The name Mikado itself means 'honorable gate,' like the Egyptian term 'pharaoh,' and reminds one of the Turkish 'sublime porte.' The first Mikado was Jimmu Tenno. As he began to reign about 660 B. C., Japanese chronology begins professedly at that point. The first seventeen Mikados are said to have lived to be over one hundred years of age,—one attaining the advanced age of one hundred and forty-one years. Seven of the one hundred

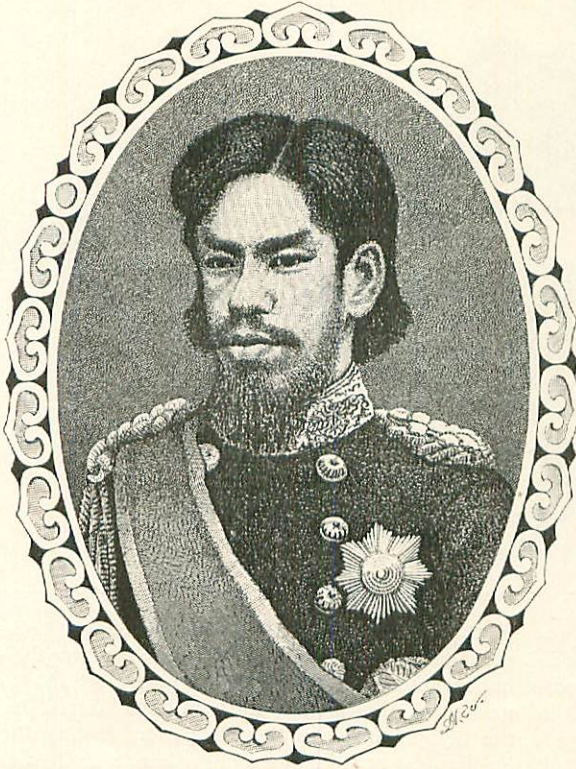
and twenty-three sovereigns in this great dynasty have been women."

"Has n't the present monarch any other name besides Mutsuhito?" I inquired.

"No," was the reply. "The Mikados have personal names, but no family names. When they die, however, each receives an *okuri-na*, or posthumous name, by which he is known in history, and no mikado can bear the name of a predecessor. In two instances, however, Mikados have reigned twice, and have received two posthumous titles each. During his life the Chinese characters representing the personal name of the Mikado were forbidden to be used (or if used, a stroke had to be omitted), the reigning Mikado being designated as *kinjō*, 'the present emperor,' or *kōtei*, 'august ruler,' and the first time in history that the sovereign's name appeared during his life-time was when Mutsuhito, in February, 1868, delivered to the foreign ministers a document in which he announced that the dual government was at an end, and that he himself had assumed the supreme government."



GATE OF THE PRESENT IMPERIAL RESIDENCE.



THE REAL MIKADO.

"How long did the dual government of Japan last?" I asked, now thoroughly interested.

"Well, although as early as 25 B. C. four corps for the defense of the country against the aborigines had been created, and each placed under a *shōgun* or general, it was not until the seventh century that a military class began to make itself felt. From the twelfth century onward, two great military families were rivals for the military supremacy, that one being successful which had possession of the Mikado for the time being. But it was not till 1596, when the Tokugawa family in the person of Iyēyasū overcame all rivals, and made their headquarters at Yedo, that the so-called dual government really began. In 1854 the then-ruling shogun or 'tycoon' gave great offense by signing the treaty with Perry, which formally 'opened' Japan, enabling eastern and western nations alike to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with the little island empire which had for so many centuries preserved its national isolation. A period of anarchy and bitter antagonism to foreigners followed, however, for over ten years. The western nations resented the barbarous way in which their subjects, resident in Japan, were treated, and sent an expedition against the empire. Suddenly, by one of those freaks of sentiment which have won for the Japanese the reputation of being fickle, a reaction in favor of the despised foreigner set in, the shogunate was suppressed, the two hundred and seventy-eight daimios, or military princes, in the empire, from patriotic motives resigned their estates into the hands of the emperor, and harmony pre-

veiled all around. This unification of the national government took place in 1868."

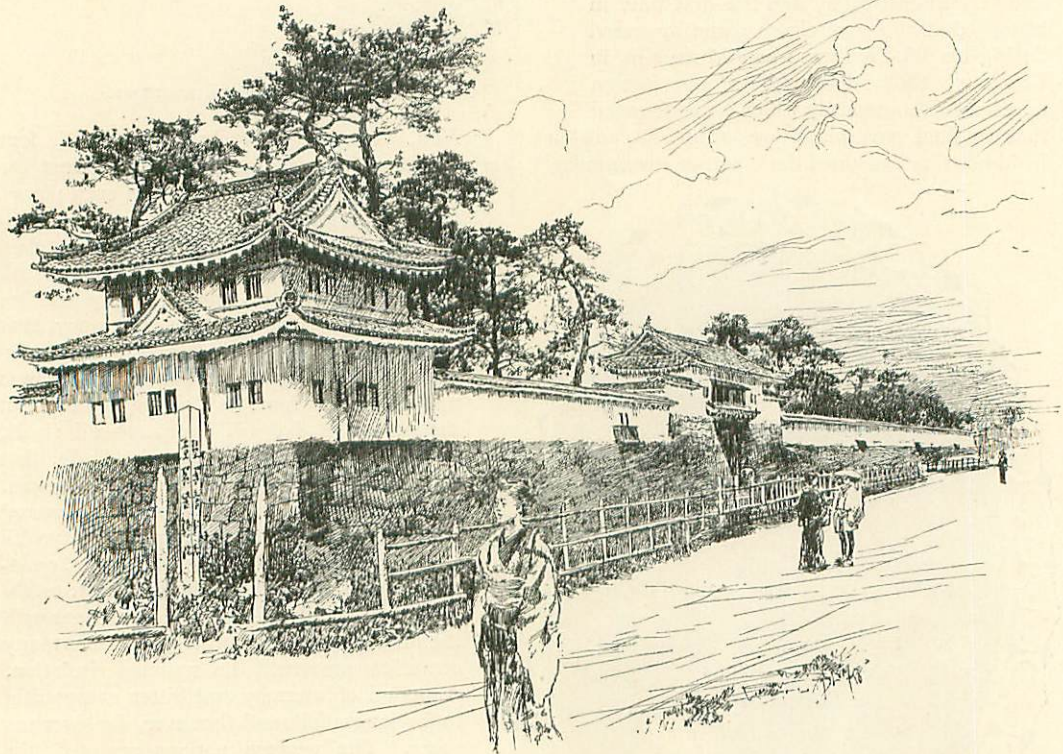
"And just what is the form of government now?" I asked.

"The Mikado is supreme in temporal and spiritual matters alike; Shintoism is the state religion; * there is an executive ministry consisting of eight departments, a Senate of thirty members, a Council of State (unlimited in number), and a Great Council, the real governing body. This Great Council has three sections—the Right, which consists of the executive ministry; the Left, which consists of the council of state; and the Center, composed of the prime minister, the vice-prime minister, and a cabinet of five 'advisers.' Matters of great importance come before the

origin—a mirror, a crystal ball, and a sword—are still cherished in the palace where the emperor is now living. These emblems have come to be viewed much as the inhabitants of Troy viewed the Palladium of their city."

"What has been the history of the present Mikado's reign, thus far?"

"Mutsuhito was the second son of Mikado Kōmei Tenno. The succession is not determined by the order of birth in the royal family, you will see. The Mikado nominates his own successor. Mutsuhito was born November 3, 1850, in the castle at Kioto, which had for years been the Mikado's capital, and therefore the sacred city of Japan. He grew up in the palace, never being allowed to see a foreigner until he was nineteen years of age.



THE OLD IMPERIAL CASTLE AT KIOTO.

Mikado and the Great Council; but unimportant questions go to the ministers. The Mikado is still an absolute monarch, but he has promised an elective parliament, to be organized in 1890."

"Does the Mikado still claim descent direct from the gods?"

"Yes, and the sacred emblems of his spiritual

In 1867 his father died, and he was declared emperor under the care of a regent. He was then but seventeen years of age. A year later the regency was abolished. Early in 1868 *Keiki San*, the Shōgun who was then in power, finding the chief nobles and daimios against him, retired, and the Mikado, as already stated, assumed the reins of government himself, and a few days later an in-

* Shintoism has since been disestablished, and there is now no state religion in Japan. The recent advances of Christianity in the Empire are marvelous.

vation came to each of the foreign representatives to visit Kioto,—an invitation which was accepted by only two, the British and Dutch ministers. Later, however, the French minister also decided to accept. On March 23, 1868, the emperor gave audiences to the ambassadors of France and Holland. This was the first time a Japanese emperor ever granted an interview to representatives of Christian nations. Four days later, Sir Harry Parkes, the British minister, with a numerous native and foreign guard, while on his way to the palace to meet the Mikado according to appointment, was attacked by assassins, and only saved by the bravery of Mr. Goto Shojiro, an officer of the Japanese Foreign Department, who rode at Sir Harry's side. The next day the imperial decree was issued by which treaty relations were established with foreign powers. On April 6th of the same year he took the oath which is the basis of the present government, pledging himself to establish a representative government. This was the emancipation of Japan from 'the uncivilized customs of former times.' From the hour when he took that oath dates the emergence of the empire from the old feudal civilization, and the Europeanization of people and country. You will perceive that the distinguished gentleman whom we are to see to-day has witnessed some momentous changes in his time."

"Yes, indeed. When was Tokio made the capital?"

"In the following year, 1869. In 1872 the Mikado adopted European dress and habits of life, at least for public service. His new palace is to be mainly in European style."

By this time we had reached the vicinity of the station. There appeared to be no excitement, although it was generally known that His Majesty would soon make his appearance. I suppose there were not above two hundred persons gathered at the station, and of these by far the greater part were jinriki-sha runners, hucksters, coolies, attachés of the railway, and people in the lower walks of life who happened to be in the vicinity. National flags (a red disk on a white ground) adorned the front of the station, but otherwise there were no decorations visible anywhere in town. Two weeks later (November 3, 1882), when the emperor's thirty-second birthday was celebrated, the houses and stores everywhere, and the ships in the bay, were profusely decked.

Just inside of the station on the stone floor stood the Mikado's private coach, to which a magnificent span of Arabian horses was attached. This coach and span had been sent on from Tokio by an early freight train, in advance of the royal party. This was not the equipage used by the emperor on state

occasions, I was told, but simply His Majesty's ordinary carriage. The horses were very docile, yet they were manifestly full of mettle, and bore themselves with the dignity becoming animals privileged to wear gold-mounted harness and to draw the Emperor of Japan. The coach was elegant in finish, but modestly plain throughout. It was covered by a green silk cloth, bearing the Mikado's crest on either side in dull gold. The most gorgeous thing about the coach was the tasseled and embroidered box-cloth provided for the driver.

Near the coach were standing the coachmen, who had accompanied the royal equipage on its journey from Tokio to Yokohama, and the emperor's private body-guard. The coachmen were immaculately dressed, wearing garments modeled after the foreign style. Their heavy dress-coats almost touched the floor, they wore white gloves, and the men's small size was partly overcome by the addition of tall silk hats with wide gold bands.

We had yet two or three minutes to wait, and my friend utilized the time by recalling some interesting reminiscences.

"Ten years ago," he said, "the advent of the Mikado in Yokohama would have created a tremendous sensation. I remember very well the occasion when the Mikado first appeared publicly before a promiscuous gathering of his subjects. It was at Tokio, upon the completion of the Yokohama railway, eleven years ago, I think. I was but a mere boy then, of course. The emperor was seated upon a rude temporary throne erected in the station. As he took his seat and became visible, every native present prostrated himself, laying his face in the very dust. Mutsuhito not only permitted himself to be seen, but made a little speech to his subjects. It was a strange day for Japan. Few of the Japanese present had ever expected to live to see the day when the sacred Mikado would forsake the solitude of his luxurious prison-palace. Prior to that day he had been more of a prisoner than is the ex-king of Oudh in his sumptuous quarters at Calcutta."

"I suppose his people think he is the most gracious and condescending of sovereigns," I observed.

"No doubt. And yet even now he does not come and go as freely as most monarchs. Whenever he goes out he is accompanied by a body-guard, and maintains everywhere an impenetrable reserve. A tourist might stay in the capital city for years without beholding his sacred person, unless he accommodated himself to the few set times when His Majesty appears by announcement before his people."



GATEWAY OF THE TOMB OF THE FIRST SHŌGUN, IYÉYASŪ.
(ENGRAVED AFTER A PAINTING BY THEO. WORRES.)

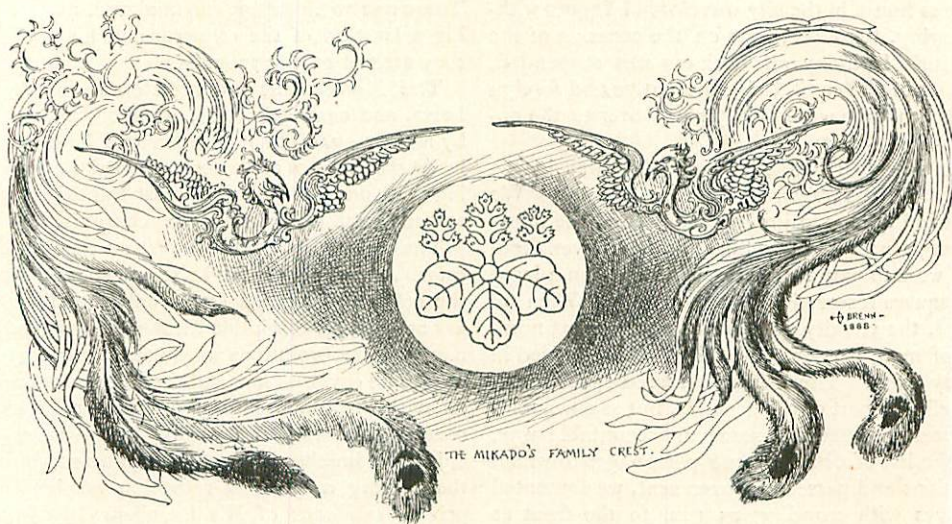
"How about the empress?"

"She is, of course, even more exclusive. The women belonging to the aristocracy of Japan are very seldom seen by travelers. Her photograph shows her to be a very pretty woman, and she takes so much interest in the young of her sex that with her own money she has founded a normal school for Japanese girls."

At this moment the royal train rolled into the

the trousers on each side, a broad white band around his soldierly cap, and the ubiquitous royal crest (consisting of sixteen chrysanthemum petals arranged in the form of a medallion) showily embellished in silver upon the lapel of his coat. This was he who swayed the destinies of 35,000,000 of people.

I find my remembrances of the emperor's features somewhat at variance with the ordinary por-



depot. First came a locomotive, plentifully decorated from smoke-stack to tender with chrysanthemums, laurel, and immortelles. Then followed seven first-class carriages, filled with high officials and court attendants. The imperial coach was in the middle of the train.

Every head was bent low in a prolonged but silent greeting. The obeisances were scarcely deeper, however, than the Japanese make one to another anywhere and at any time.

"There is nothing required now in the way of formal homage to the emperor," whispered my friend, "and only one thing expressly prohibited in the way of disrespect. No subject can look down upon him."

"Look down upon him?" I repeated.

"Yes," was the reply. "Literally, I mean. No Japanese is permitted to view the Mikado from an upper window as he passes by in the street below."

"Under penalty of —?"

"Arrest and imprisonment."

At this point two or three functionaries stepped from the imperial coach, followed a moment later by a tall, erect young man dressed in a uniform of dark-blue stuff, with immense white stripes down

traits of him which appear from time to time in magazine articles and in the pictorial press. He is decidedly not a handsome man. Indeed it was to my mind his bearing in spite of his face, and not his face at all, which gave him the air of dignity — I might almost say of austerity — which characterized him. His face was swarthy, rather unintellectual than strong, and adorned with a precarious growth of whiskers. As beards are not indigenous to the Japanese chin, I could not admire his good taste, so much as I did his courage, in trying to raise a beard. I notice that his later photographs represent him with only a mustache.

His Majesty, attended by an honorary guard of officials, walked rapidly from the car through a waiting-room and entered his coach, from which the green cloth was now removed. The other Tokio dignitaries entered handsome coaches provided by some Yokohama stable, and the whole procession proceeded direct to the race-course, accompanied by an escort of soldiers, police, and musicians. The road that led to the track had been freshly graded, rolled, and graveled in honor of the royal party.

Anxious to gain still another glimpse of Japanese royalty, I persuaded my friend to go up to Tokio

with me, a fortnight later, to witness the ceremonies in connection with the celebration of the emperor's birthday in that city. There are a great many holidays observed in the Orient, even the banks and leading business-houses closing on the slightest provocation. I think there were twenty-one so-called legal holidays each year in Yokohama, at the time of which I am now writing. During the three days of the Yokohama races already referred to, for instance, every bank and prominent business house in the city was closed! It goes without saying, therefore, that on the occasion of the emperor's birthday all business was suspended, and that in the capital city the native and foreign population alike were wholly given over to the observance of the day.

The principal attraction in Tokio was in the quarter called Hibiya, or "parade-ground." We proceeded thither in jinriki-shas. Here the imperial troops in garrison, to the number of seven thousand, were to parade before the Mikado on a large open square reserved for that purpose. When we arrived, the vicinity was thronged with great numbers of men, women, and children, all arrayed in holiday attire. There was a reserved space in the most eligible part of the grounds, but as our names had been omitted, in some unaccountable way, from the list of distinguished personages to whom invitations and passes had been sent, we contented ourselves with crowding as near to the front as possible.

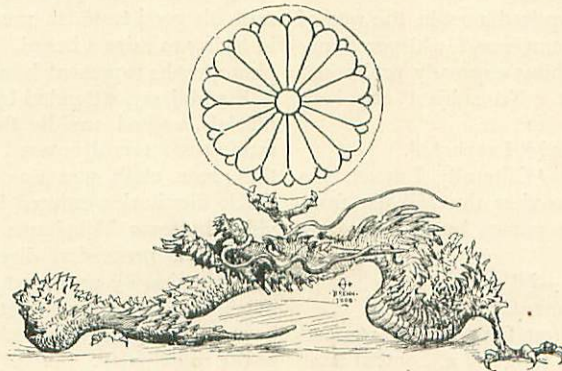
In general the sights were such as are characteristic of these occasions the world over. There were innumerable booths, where enterprising natives were taking advantage of the gathering to do a big business on a small scale; the articles of merchandise consisting of all sorts of toys, banners, confectionery, photographs, fruits, and a thousand strange-looking articles besides, the classification

of which is beyond my power. I was impressed, however, with the minuteness of the profits made. There were articles on sale with the prices marked in rin, the tenth part of a cent. One sen (of a value little less than an American cent) would buy a glass of a beverage corresponding to our lemonade, half a dozen sticks of candy, or a collection of pulpy wads which became handsome ferns upon being cast into a vessel of water.

The behavior of the crowd was rather quiet. There was no hurraing, no applause, and no audible salutation of the emperor and his staff when they arrived on the grounds.

The Mikado was mounted on a fine Arabian horse, and came preceded, attended, and followed by a body-guard of policemen and lancers. The leading officers of state accompanied the royal retinue, all arrayed in their finest military uniforms and mounted on their favorite chargers.

The parade and review were an agreeable surprise. Although the small size and smooth faces of the soldiers detracted somewhat from their military aspect, the discipline displayed was good, and many of the evolutions were very pleasing to the eye. The cavalry managed their horses admirably. After the review the foreign representatives proceeded to the imperial yashiki by invitation, and enjoyed a luncheon served in Japanese fashion. In the evening a splendid reception was held at the private residence of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which was attended by more than a thousand guests, native and foreign. The house was lavishly decorated, and the extensive grounds illuminated as only grounds in the Orient are illuminated. A feature of the reception was a magnificent display of fire-works, in which the novelties introduced and the combinations of colors were the subject of admiring comment on the part of the foreign population.



THE OFFICIAL CREST OF THE MIKADO.