



## MORIMOTO.

THE inhabitants of Japan have a pronounced predilection for the grotesque. The most popular amusements are theatrical representations, the great achievements of the "artists" consisting in extraordinary contortions of the limbs and faces. Not only single "artists," but whole groups of them practise these contortions, and the one who can imitate best the grotesquely carved images is sure of a clamorous reception from the audience.

Amongst these "mimics" Morimoto has achieved the highest reputation. This man produces the most astounding effects with his facial contortions, as may

pleasure beams on his countenance, and a satisfaction of the deepest intensity sparkles in his eyes.

The third picture shows Morimoto again as the "god of riches," but this time he is disappointed; he has found no treasure. Shadows of deep sorrow overcast his face; the chin is raised over the tip of the nose, and suppressed malice lurks in the eyes.

But the height of Morimoto's art is reached in the fourth picture. The god Daruma lived in the sixth century. He is of Indian origin, came to Japan to preach Buddhism, he found many adherents, and is to this day the most popular household god. His old



be seen from the pictures given. He can raise his lips and chin above the tip of the nose, and bury his mouth in the folds of his cheeks. The pictures present him, first, in his natural appearance, then as the "god of riches," pleased, and disappointed, and as the "god Daruma."

The "god of riches" he presents in two characters. He carries a sack of gold on his back, stooping under its heavy weight, but still seeking for more treasures. He taps the soil with a hammer, and, if the sounds indicate that he has found gold, a bright expression of

days he passed in the mountains as a recluse. He is generally represented without feet, having "worn them away" in his long and weary wanderings.

If Morimoto represents this mournful idol, he squats on the floor, covered from head to foot in a red cloth. The chin is raised over the tip of the nose, as in the third picture; but the mouth is buried in the severe folds of the cheeks, thus indicating the austere abstemiousness of the recluse, whilst his eyes stare into blank vacancy. Morimoto is a master of his art, who has no equal, even in Japan.