

WE TWO TOGETHER

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AND
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(J. H. C). On settling down as Professor of modern English poetry in Keio University I learned that I had already arrived in

Japan and was "quite famous" in translations in coterie magazines. I had no way of enjoying my fame, as I must learn the syllabic ideographs into which the Roman script of my originals was transformed. A re-translation back into the queer English of Japan did no more than tell me that the subject matter of poetry in Japan consisted of sight and sentiment—something visible to the mind's eye with, by preference, a sad feeling attached to it. Ideas went over the Japanese head as easily as they went through the Irish one. I had typed synopses of studies on the way from India, thinking I was going to be Guru to the successors of the students before whom Lafcadio Hearn worked out his famous lectures. Instead, I had to pack the synopses at the bottom of a trunk for use when I got back to India; and my classes turned into shallow annotations of the meanings of meaningless poems.

I asked the most articulate of my students why he was interested in English poetry—to which he added French and Italian that he was studying, as he was studying English, entirely for content, with no desire for their architecture or imagination or music. He told me, with a self-assurance so congenial and deep-seated as to be unaware of itself, that he was studying in order to be able to take Japanese culture to Europe. Japan was, he said, the Italy of the East; but French and English were the most widespread means of expression.

My general class-work received an extension when I gave a series of seven public lectures on "Modern English Poetry," by request of the University, in the great auditorium, once a week. The hall was filled by teachers and students specially interested from all the Universities and language teaching institutions in Tokyo. Each lecture was reported in extenso in the press, and summaries went to China and the United States of America. After each of the seven lectures I gave tea and cake to a couple of dozen eminent visitors, each group being different, and made many friendships, one of them being with the Unitarian organiser of the University, Dr. Clay Macaulay, then 80, who in his youth had known Emerson. The effect of these lectures, aided by the emphasis that was laid on my verse and prose, was that

I became something of a literary lion; only something, for I shrank from the drums and trumpets of mainly ignorant laudation, and responded with a not too leonine roar to invitations to poetry parties here and there in the city, and to schools and colleges before which I had to play the role of a collaborator with two poets, A.E. and Yeats, whose fame appeared, somewhat to my discomfiture, to spread over me a double Elijah-mantle whose hem hung round my shoulders and tended to obscure such literary costuming as I might legitimately wear.

One of these meetings took a very distinct place in my life. I was called on by a dapper young Japanese to convey to me an invitation from the promoters of a new magazine, "The Asian Review," conducted entirely by Japanese, but written in English, to act as literary supervisor. This led to a ceremonial dinner to inaugurate the magazine. The dinner took place in a beautifully furnished Japanese restaurant in the heart of Tokyo. As we calculated, speculated, romanced, and glowed, the Japan of the bowler hat and French Renaissance architecture receded. We moved forward, by a curious inversion, towards the seventh century when the great influx of spiritual idealism from India through Buddhism awoke the island empire to true being. A group of geisha danced and sang. When they bowed farewell, a troop of girl attendants began their shuffling procession of eatables that occupied an hour and a half. When the last item had disappeared, the editor told the story of the inception of the magazine—a growing feeling on the part of a group of alert men that ordinary journalism was standing between the outside world and a true understanding of the national aims and methods of Japan; a determination to circumvent the evils arising out of this circumstance and the discovery of possibilities of idealistic propaganda not at first visualised. Just before the function concluded, something happened. I felt I wanted some incense sticks, and got them. I handed an incense stick each to seven of the company and asked them to light them from the *hibachi* (fire box) and placed them on the *tokonoma* (picture-recess) in front of the dummy magazine. I stepped back towards the unoccupied end of the room. I dropped on my knees, and with hands palm to

palm invoked the blessing of the supreme spirit of the universe, as we dedicated 'The Asian Review' to the service of Humanity, and prayed that the ancient ever-living soul of Japan might use it as an instrument through which She might again incarnate fully in Her people, for the uplifting of the world.

As I rose to my feet, the others automatically did the same. The Indian invocation, Om, came resonantly through my lips. Then all together cried *Banzai, Banzai, Banzai*, throwing our hands, in the traditional manner, above our heads with each cry.

A Japanese translation of my invocation was published throughout the Empire. I drafted, by request, the editorial foreword of the first number, and corrected the English of it and a second. My return to India broke the connection, and I do not know what happened to the Review; but I have occasionally wondered if it was as idealistic as I thought, or subtly paving the way for the subsequent attempt to civilize Asia in Japan's own way, which ended in tragedy.

My living conditions were exactly to my desire to experience the life and ways of Japan. I was shown a disused tea-room of the President of the University that I could have, with the warning that it was in entirely Japanese style. I accepted the offer and I was left alone after hours save for the cook of the club and his family, the sole Professor on the premises. The room was about 12 feet square; a wooden structure with paper windows (*shoji*); sliding doors (*amado*); a floor of woven cane matting (*tatami*) filled with cotton waste, clean and resilient, pleasant for all waking and sleeping activities; cupboards with pictured sliding doors; a *tokonoma* (recess) for a *kakemono* (hanging picture) and a piece of craftsmanship. The roof of my home was shingled with small wooden "tiles." It was entered from outside by a twisted row of stepping stones along a "garden" that grew here and there a shrub and tallish trees. There were three stone slabs as steps from ground to verandah. From the first of these I looked across uncountable house-roofs on one side of the city. In the foreground the watch-tower of a fire-station clanged out the news when the "flowers of Tokyo" were in bloom; and the cook awoke me at any hour of the night to don my *kimono* and

watch if any of the glittering petals were borne by the wind of destiny to our roof.

Beyond the fire-tower and the wave-like but motionless ocean of roofs, on clear days I could see from the lowest step to my verandah the cone of Fujiyama, sixty miles away, exquisite in snow-crowned simplicity. At one sunset, one only, I was transfixed by a shaft of light from the sun as it dropped, with the shape-changings of twilight, right into the crater of the mountain, and laid red areas of reflection on the surface of a pool between my room and the University club, through which the dull shine of eternally moving gold-fish seemed to be weaving fibrous patterns out of the diffuse stuff of light and night.

I recall a conversation, partly in Japanese, partly in English, that tried to be highly anglicised but only succeeded in being Japanised pidgin, a conversation in the drawing-room of Paul and Mira Richard, at whose home in the suburbs of Tokyo I was a frequent visitor. Politics were then at the top of the conversational bill among people who trusted one another to keep confidences intact. I was regarded as one such, I don't know why. On that occasion I heard more socialism talked than I had done since my early twenties, when I was a devotee of Robert Blatchford with his spicy weekly paper, "The Clarion." When all had departed save a quiet, good-living revolutionary, I remarked to our host how interesting it was that such rank socialism, the antithesis of the Japanese political organisation, should be espoused by certain of the company who were officers of the Palace. The mild Japanese revolutionary smiled and said something in his own language and translated it into English which, shaped by the French mind of Paul Richard and oiled by mine, became "The darkest spot in under the lamp," (not of course, the modern electric bulb).

"And yet," as I wrote in my book 'The New Japan' two years after I returned to India, "There were elements in the life of Japan as I saw it which puzzled me. There was no mistaking the universal intense personal delight in artistic objects; yet some of these objects, while exquisite as regards material and craftsmanship, were hideous in subject—masks,

for instance, in ivory, wood or clay, representing vile demoniacal countenances." I noted the irritating juxtaposition of beautiful embroidery and ugly angles in women's clothing; of horrible new-fangled electric poles beside exquisite traditional buildings. It was "not easy to understand how a people so sensitive to beauty in the particular should be so insensitive to ugliness in the general. . . ." By and by my delight in Japanese painting, ancient and modern, and in the various crafts, was chastened by the realization that these lacked idealism; and idealism was, in my æsthetical credo, the test of the quality and life-expectancy of any work of art, whether it was expressed or implied. The lack of æsthetical sensitiveness showed itself in a number of ways, but two will serve as examples.

In a historical play a fleeing chieftain just had to have a horse. So one came fumbling along a gangway that, in the queer mixture of realism and symbolism, meant from a distance. Its head went up and down like a child's movable toy; its tail oscillated with the regularity of a clock-pendulum. It was accepted as a stage horse, though it walked on four human feet. On another occasion a castle was burnt to the ground by actual fire on the stage. These junks of realism added nothing to the outer or inner action of the drama; rather they held up the action. Some element of self-deception appeared to pass over from stage-craft to authorship. A Professor of English (a Japanese) invited me to a first performance of a new play of his. The setting and language were Japanese. The author explained the situations as they arose, until this became unnecessary, as I perceived that it was a familiar play of Bernard Shaw's located and dressed in Japan, but attributed to that Professor.

Some similar lapse from æsthetical morale seemed to me to have befallen Japanese painting. The works of Yokoyama Taikwan, one of the then few living followers of the Japanese pictorial tradition modified within its own genre, were lovely in composition and technique, perfect if you wanted nothing more than a picture to look at, but soulless. "How is it," I asked Mr. Taikwan in his studio, "that you, the foremost progressive painter in Japan today, as I have been told, have

shown me half a dozen pictures here the subjects of which I have, in my short study of Japanese art, seen many times in the works of other artists both past and present?" (Waterfalls, pine-trees, carp, etc.) He replied: "It is because we Japanese have no originality. We do not invent or think. We take pleasure in going over and over the same subjects. Our art is all in its technique." To which he added, "We look to India for ideas."

I saw the disease of modernism in full blast in the western-style section of the annual exhibition of Japanese painting in Ueno Park—"a Japanese annexation of the most rudimentary elements in western art schools, elements that were carried some degrees lower in the scale of bad art than their prototypes could achieve." There were others who saw this conflict. "The Japan Year Book" dated it in "the era of chaos." Typical of it was a painting that "summed up the technical, æsthetical and mental offence of the new movement." A glass bowl containing several gold-fish rests on a lacquered stand about three feet high. The stand is placed in the middle of the floor of a room—likewise in the middle of the picture. Two ladies stand gazing at the gold-fish, one on each side of the bowl, each a replica of the other in size, position and attitude. So far so bad as regards commonplaceness of idea and dullness in conception. But—the ladies were stark naked and fat, and the complexion of the skin gave one the creepy feeling that they had not been painted in oils, but boiled in oil. I can recall the group of modernised students scrutinising my face for signs of my reaction. One asked me what I thought of it. I replied in a query: "Do Japanese ladies take off their clothes when they view gold-fish?" They pondered the question for a moment, and one answered, "No." I passed on to the next garish caricature of art; and neither the questioning student nor his companions had the ghost of an idea that my own question had put the oleaginous nightmare in its place as a pretentious and unintelligent mockery of both art and life.

But there was one Japanese artist who gravitated to me at the end of one of my Keio lectures, whose work, when I saw

it in his studio at Yoyogi, on the outskirts of Tokyo, gave me the touch of greatness in both extent and quality and vision. Tami Koume, a young man, was not only a painter of superlative achievement in both Japanese and western ways; he was a thinker, and had had experiences of the life beyond this which coloured and exalted his art. But the earthquake of 1922 ended his career.

On the perimeter of Tokyo, at the suburb of Nakano, when Noguchi was lecturing in Keio University on classical English poetry as I was on modern, was his lovely home where I had my first flavourous touch with Japanese life and the menace to life in earthquakes. I had "jumped to the generalisation that Noguchi, in his excellences and limitations, was the most typical entity in Japan. I had begun to perceive that the absence of the abstract quality in the mentality of my students was not a defect of youth, but was common to professors and students, and to professional and business men whom I met There was no feeling of long views, of large conceptions, of the wavy edge that is characteristic of the horizon of mystical vision. But this mental character was acted upon by a unique aesthetical sense which, where it could not interiorly influence the mental nature, at least set the mark of art somewhere upon it, and let the incongruity speak its own message." In his home on Sunday afternoons, when I was not visiting elsewhere, in addition to much talk on painting and verse, I read through his books, and noted their aesthetical qualities and cerebral deficiencies. But his regard for Japanese painting was almost wholly indigenous, and went into valuable books in English.

On my visits to Nakano, the process of exchanging greetings and removing footwear in the somewhat dark entrance to Noguchi's house did not give me the opportunity of recognising what appeared to be a relief of, perhaps, Shakespeare. But one day I realised that it was the life-mask of Francis Thompson, and asked how on earth it came to be there. He told me that, when in England, in 1903, he had been given this copy of the mask by Francis Meynell in London with strict unjunctions that he was not to let it out of his possession or to allow it to be copied. I

suggested the exchange of the mask for that of a leering stage-demon in the studio. Whereupon the family—Noguchi carrying the Thompson relief, Mrs. Noguchi, and the three children—with the maid at the end, and myself in front purifying its transit by waving fragrant incense sticks, made a procession that would have caused the serious Catholic poet almost to smile.

My circle extended its circumference when I spent a week-end at Yokosuka (accent on kos) the chief naval harbour of Japan, in the home of my most intimate pupil, Genichi Yanome. His father was a General, in charge of the concealed fortifications that were intended to protect the Emperor and the country. A less warlike person would be difficult to discover outside Japan: four-feet-plus from ground level, chubby, smiling. The General welcomed me by kneeling on a cushion on the floor and touching the floor with his forehead. I did the same on the cushion on the other side of the hibachi.

I had reached the Yanome home through the streets and by the harbour, the streets crowded with seamen on leave, the harbour crowded with warships of all kinds and sizes. But I did not talk to Yanome of my reactions to Japanese pugnacity. Indeed, he did most of the talking, for our walk gave him an unusual opportunity to be autobiographical. His father was of the Zen sect of Buddhism, which had evolved the tea ceremony and the Noh drama on the side of meditation, and ju-jitsu on the side of action. His father had taught him the latter as a means of self-defence, and it had come useful at a crisis. It happened that fellow-students and himself had fallen in love with the same girl, who showed a tendency to favour him. His rivals had decided to eliminate him and reduce the competition to A and B. They waylaid him on the bank of a river. Much to the surprise of A and B, they found themselves floundering in quick succession in the not too clean river. Ju-jitsu had done its duty. But it might only have postponed and intensified the enmity of adolescence. The girl disposed of the situation by committing suicide. General Yanome left his family free to follow their own religious bent. His wife was a strong Protestant. Their charming and intelligent

daughter was a pious Roman Catholic. The son was a modern materialist.

My next radius extended 45 minutes by train west of Tokyo, plus a short electric train-run to the sea-shore and a walk to Kamakura Bay, every minute and foot crammed with Japanese life and nature: men, women and children at all sorts of avocations and summer enjoyments. The occasion was an excursion of the Young Party, a group that had no rules save those of happy youth; no officers save those who would give a perpetual contribution of happiness; no programme save that of the season and desire. Initiation was achieved by participation in an adventure. I was regarded as eligible, though in sight of fifty. They discovered that "the grey in my hair was like snow on a volcano; it covered the fire of incorrigible youth." I had no excuse for not becoming a member. Hence this adventure of initiation. The party numbered nine, three ladies, six young men. We wandered about, plucked gigantic tiger lilies, exchanged poems and thoughts and quips, and lunched al fresco at a restaurant at the entrance to the grounds in which the Dai Butsu (more-than-man, Buddha) had sat since skill and vision had, in 1252, constructed out of bronze plates an image of the Buddhist calm and meditation, thirty feet high. We entered the hollow interior, and reverently climbed the stair to the little shrine within the head.

The home of Professor E. E. Speight, at Nikko, 90 miles from Tokyo, was a farther extension of my travel-radii, a two-storeyed house, without architectural pretension, next neighbour to the summer residence of the Midado on one side, and to a Noh enthusiast on the other, who dragged the chants of the drama from his solar plexus or his pelvis for hours daily in a voice that on a western platform would earn him the tribute of ancient eggs or cabbages. The interior of the house, where it was not used for eating and sleeping, was a collector's paradise. Every nook and corner, floor mat and shelf and wall space, was crowded and covered with ornamented sword guards, dagger handles, ivory and wood-carved ornaments, statuettes, colour prints, kakemono. On the upper floor I was given a lovely room to inhabit for three

weeks during a 'tween-terms vacation, part of which I had spent with the Richards higher up near the hill station of Oiwake on the side of the perpetually active volcano, Asama Yama. My first night in Speight's home set poetry going. He himself had written much excellent verse that oscillated between clever humour and high idealism, with good-will and gentle sentiment between. At the end of a happy afternoon and evening of literary and artistic exchange he escorted me to my room. On a table at my bed-head I noticed a receptacle containing a number of sharpened pencils, also a writing-pad. These, I learned, were a constant provision for visitors who, like himself, might have sleepless hours and might need materials for whiling them away. When I was abed, with an electric reading-lamp at hand and shelves of the latest books of English verse in the shadow, the pencils turned into spears of challenge and the pad into a shield. Something in me remembered a night on the steamer from Calcutta when I had been entranced by the sight of Venus and Jupiter in so close conjunction that the long silver reflection of the two planets became one on the placid surface of the sea. Something of the spirit of Japanese poetry, its brevity and clarity, asserted itself, and I put the conjunction into a quatrain that I hoped would give not too much pain to the poetical sensitiveness of mine host.

When I awoke after a dreamless night I was surprised to find that something deeper than either dreaming or waking consciousness had taken the four lines as the theme of what I saw to be a well-constructed and deftly worded development in two intellectually complementary directions as of beings, one descending into the waters of our life, the other rising from below upwards, as of the aspiring spirit of humanity. All I had to do was to transcribe an already composed poem, "A Planetary Conjunction."

I had seen press reports of violin and piano recitals by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Eichheim in and around Tokyo in aid of good causes; and when he, as his contribution to an after-tea American entertainment, told of his keen interest in the music of Hindustan, and of their intention to visit that country, I knew

that I had found two spiritual friends. Henry Eichheim had, for almost a generation, been a show-fiddler of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His wife was a first-class pianist. In subsequent days at Nikko they quenched the thirst of Speight and myself for good music, and I planned a tour of the musical centres of India for them with appropriate introductions.

Through the Eichheims I extended my travel radius the whole length of the great road, colour-printed by Japanese masters, from Tokyo to Kyoto, 400 miles, for a week-end of musical friendship and mutual pleasure in nature and art. Of the conjunction of nature and art, the temple of Kiyomidzu remains in memory as a type; so perfectly allied in form and situation that one yields to the aesthetical illusion that nature shaped and draped the wooded hillside to fit the work of art. And nature was at her autumnal best. Above, below, and, around the temple which stood on the edge of a sheer cliff, the foliage of pines, maples and cedars had developed all possible shades of red and yellow over the fundamental browns, greys and greens of stems and branches and persistent leafage.

Winter, with coughs and chills in the air and the thorax, brought a desire for a change to a place of milder temperature than Tokyo or Kyoto. Atami, a centre of hot-springs, 50 miles from Tokyo, was chosen, and the Scottish wife of the Scottish journalist, Hugh Byas, editor of the Hebraically owned English daily paper, "The Japanese Advertiser," added to the Eichheim-Cousins group. We imagined ourselves whizzing in a big car over the last 20 miles of 'new motor road' (vide advertisements). But it was to be otherwise. At a wayside hotel the driver put festoons of chains round the wheels. This, we soon found, was because the road was so new that it had not got past the stage of a succession of mud-pits over which the car lurched, shook, stopped and bolted. At times we hung by the skin of the teeth of the chained wheels over sheer quaky cliffs high above the ocean that seemed to spring up towards us with white-mouthed anticipation. Half an hour went in extricating a country cart from a hole. And as if there were not enough holes to serve all possible purposes, we were held up another half hour

by men blasting the road, while the musician heartily did the same.

But at the end of the three most timber-shivering hours that I ever hope to travel on this side of the Inferno, everything was forgotten in the vision of the lovely little town of Atami on the edge of the blue Pacific. The smoke-plumed volcanic island of Oshima on the horizon was happily a couple of years or more from the scheduled date of its explosion and the catastrophic earthquake that it generated. Colours and contours at every bend of the road exhausted our adjectives of admiration. Laughter gave a period of recuperation as a man working on the bottom of a boat, naked in winter water (December 16), came to the shore to *warm his hands* at a small wood-fire.

A walk next day took us up a bridle path to a height of 2,700 feet in four miles, to the Ten Provinces pass. At the shrine from which one gets the first glimpse of Fuji Yama (12,365 feet) overcoats, that a servant had carried on a shoulder-pole, had to be donned. Near here we came on a little snow-covered inn, surrounded by chrysanthemums and stone images, and shaded by gnarled snow-laden pines: the Japan of pictures and prints. Across a broad expanse of sloping country Fuji rose, snow-clad, lonely, robed in entrancing simplicity and purity, surely the most lovely single natural object in the world.

The reputation of the railway—a thing, so to speak, of bamboo and string, that wriggled on shaky props over the edge of the Pacific dragged by a true copy of the precursor of George Stephenson's "Puffing Billy,"—denied it our patronage on our return journey; so did our experience of the "new motor road." The remaining mode of transport was a small coastal steamer, an ancient wooden affair, cocked on the water and tilting as each passenger stepped aboard. The ocean had the sheen and smoothness of oiled silk of an amazing blue-green colour. Fuji was seen momentarily at breaks along the coast, with a last glorious view as the beautiful finial of a foreground of pine-clad land, smooth water and fishing craft. And there is a final memory of an American lady and a Scottish one being carried from the steamer to the shore pickaback by two all but

naked Japanese men, who grasped their projecting legs like the shafts of rickshaws in what I smiled to see as a reversal of "the white man's burden." Some time afterwards, all the fatal accidents that might have given us a joint obituary notice happened to others. Later still much of the town was burnt out.

My friendship with the Eichheims brought about an incident that indicated the worlds that revolved and rotated within worlds in the area of the firmament under which the Sun Goddess created Japan. On my autumnal visit to them in Kyoto I found they were hungry for friendship with their kindred, especially as Thanksgiving Day was approaching, and there would be social jollification among the American population at Tokyo. As I was *persona grata* at the American Embassy I was aware of anticipations of the annual event, though, not being an American in this incarnation, I knew I was not on the invitation list. But it occurred to me that the Eichheims might be on it if strings were delicately pulled. I had to ascertain whether the Embassy would care to have after-dinner music; and if so, would the musicians accept an invitation. The musicians thrilled to the idea—but high-up diplomats, they were sure, would not stretch their hospitality down to mere artists. The Ambassador, Roland Morris, when I made an occasion to suggest, that, if he would like good music on Thanksgiving night, the Eichheims might be in Tokyo, said: "What!—but they are big artists. They wouldn't stoop to a mere diplomatic feed." And that was how I came in for the after-dinner coffee, and was enthroned beside the Ambassador, who rolled in his chair with joy as the happy fiddler played, as he probably never played before, and the lovely gracious pianist made a perfect accompanist and exquisite soloist. Between them they lifted what might have been an ordinary rowdy-dowdy into an artistic event of the highest order; and at the end of each item the Ambassador smacked me on whichever part was nearest him, and stage-whispered, "You did it!"

There was another diplomat (name reserved) who indicated another of the criss-crosses of life in Japan. I was invited to give a talk to a school for western children run by missionaries;

an improving talk, but without religious references—from which limitation I know that my own religious convictions were debarred. It had been rumoured that I was a dreadful thing called a Theosophist and some of the parents had kept their offspring at home on that dangerous afternoon. To those exposed to infection I gave a talk on what I should like to be if I were at their age: a circle (which they learned about in their mathematics) that would look in every direction yet always at one circumference (moral: see everybody as members of the one human family); a loom (such as they could see in weavers' houses) on which a shuttle made, out of threads that had no apparent connection, lovely designs (moral: look for beauty and wisdom everywhere, and try to weave them out of our own lives); a mountain (which they learned about in geography) that rose like Fujiyama, into the clouds and attracted showers of refreshing and nourishing rain for the thirsty plains (moral: as we grow older try to rise higher not only in position but in character, and in doing so we shall find that we are also going deeper and expanding our lives). I was cordially thanked for my address, so appropriate and helpful—and the good people didn't know that I had laid out the three objects of the Theosophical Society. On my way home in the tram a lad sat beside me and told me he had been at my lecture. He thought he understood it better than any one else present. Why? Because he was a student of the Vedantic philosophy and Theosophy. How on earth . . . ? He had translated some of Swami Vivekananda's writings into Spanish. His father, Ambassador of a South American Republic, had translated "The Secret Doctrine." He would tell him, and he would invite me to call. The weird juxtaposition of the Bengali philosopher, the Russian occultist, the Spanish language, and a South American Embassy in Japan, not forgetting one sometimes referred to as an Irish poet, kept the front part of my cerebrum in a whirl half the night. Next afternoon I had to sit some minutes in the Ambassador's office while he disposed of business with secretaries. When the last had gone, the formal mask in which he had received me fell away. He turned the key of the door, smiled, set me in a chair by his table, and said, "Now we

can talk." And we talked and talked of mutual interests and experiences. He showed me his 18-year old son's printed translations, and put the climax on them in two large volumes of "The Secret Doctrine" in Spanish, translated, as I knew, by himself.

After one of my University lectures I was asked by an Indian and two Koreans to have a chat in my room. The essence of it was that the Indian, and other Indian friends, were tired of intellectual isolation, and wished that I would found a lodge of The Theosophical Society in which they and kindred Japanese and Korean spirits could meet for free interchange of ideas on the deeper problems of life. I declined to take the initiative, being but a passing visitor; but, my "terms of reference" from Mrs. Besant were that if I was asked if I knew anything about Theosophy, I needn't say no. So I was asked to address a public meeting on the Three Objects of The Theosophical Society. A large hall was filled. Some one suggested the formation of a Lodge. An application of seven members was necessary. Twelve persons, chiefly Japanese, signed applications for membership and authorised me to cable to the President at Adyar, Mrs. Besant, for cabled admission and a Lodge Charter as they wanted a Lodge started before I left Japan for India.

During a month's holiday with the Richards in Oiwake, half way up the ever-active volcano, Asamayama, Monsieur Richard occupied a good deal of my time indoors in helping him to translate a growing collection of "slogans" into English. His French mind revelled in the chiselling of well-shaped epigrams, such as, "Dogma: the living faith of the dead, become the dead faith of the living." The slogans accumulated, and fell into balanced groups and related chapters, and amounted to a castigation, by an ex-clergyman, of ordinary Christianity of remarkable intellectuality and superb cheek, a revision of the New Testament that put the "higher criticism" on the level of Puckish literature, with the humour of Puck displaced by sword-edged wit. When the question of a title arose, I suggested "The Gospel according to (Saint?) Paul (Richard)." He demurred: "Let us be modest—at least in the title." So it became

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"The Scourge of Christ," recalling the Biblical story of Jesus driving the money-changers and merchants out of the temple with a whip of small cords. I got the script past the censorship, between Japan and India, and it was published in Madras. Years later Madame Richard became "Mother" of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's Ashrama at Pondichery.

Another glimpse of the Japan of 1919-1920 as I got it was of the Noh drama (*Noh*, accomplishment). In the 14th and 15th centuries (in western reckoning) stories out of the Buddhist tradition were dramatised for enactment in dance. A simple story leading up to an emotion that could be expressed in dance, was told in a slow guttural chant by the actors, with fife-and-drum accompaniment.

The Noh drama brought about a juxtaposition of personalities that remains in my memory with the mixed aroma of a number of differently scented incense-sticks. From the "box" of a fellow Professor of Keio (a square space on the floor within low wooden partitions) my attention was deflected by an elderly Japanese lady two sections from ours, who occasionally took her eyes off the stage to make notes in a book, probably a print of the text of the drama. I asked who she was. My host's unemphatic answer, was "The widow of Lafcadio Hearn." At the end of the dance, I paid my respects to Mrs. Hearn through translation by my host, Professor Togawa, and a fellow-guest, Yone Noguchi. My reference to Ireland appeared to move her deeply; for her husband, though Grecian on his mother's side, specially favoured the Irishry that came to him through his father. She had kept their home as it was during his lifetime, and invited me to call for tea and a chat on November 7.

Mrs. Koizumi, the name taken by her husband when he became a Japanese citizen, treasured all that reminded her of the world-famed man with whom her life had been linked, and whose spirit, according to her faith, continued to be linked with hers. She showed me his writing-table on which he produced books of which she could read nothing, his seat, his numerous pipes, his obviously much used volumes of Herbert Spencer, and the shrine in his study for a portion of his spirit, in which a light was placed as a

representation of spiritual illumination, and bread offered as an indication of the unchanging service of consecrated love.

Tea was laid on Hearn's writing-table. Her children, now young men and women, were, she said, out at their various avocations. But Mr. Koizumi would be with us in the portrait hanging on the wall. I conveyed to the sweet old lady in black kimono my special pleasure at the occasion, which happened to be my wife's birthday. She was obviously touched. She glanced occasionally at the portrait and then at me. I felt she saw some similarity of shape in the head, and in complexion, which vaguely reminded me of a Celtic type, and probably called up a racial resemblance in her own memory. At the door, when we were leaving, she was almost jaunty, as if some familiar thing of the heart had come to the surface of life, not with a reminder of loss but of the everlasting gain of even a few years of mutual affection and service. Through Professor Togawa she said: "You are the first man in the fifteen years since my husband's death who has recalled him vividly to me."

On March 5 (1920) I received a cable recalling me to Madanapalle. In letters I had sensed problems that appeared to need my personal attention. I had made enquiries as to a passage to India should my return become essential. No berth westward would be available for at least nine months. With a possible additional academical year before me I searched about for work to keep me from rusting. Keio was willing to keep me another year, and suggested that I should cable to Mrs. Cousins to come and give classes in English and music. Two other Universities, at which I had given lectures, invited me to repeat my Keio lectures to them. All of these engagements would pay well, and send us back to India with two healthy nest-eggs for the future. Mrs. Cousins got permission to relinquish the work on which she had been engaged for the year of my absence, of which she will herself tell. Then came the recall, urgent and final. I had no choice. My precious "free will" was intimidated by an incorrigible romanticism that preferred the adventure of idealistic education on "subsistence allowance" to wealth for merely utilitarian work.

When I received the recall cable I telephoned to a friend asking him to come with me to the steamship office on a last chance? The chief clerk was sympathetic but without hope. I was about to retire to search for a miracle in some other direction, when the clerk excused himself to answer the telephone. After a number of *moshi moshis* (hello) and spasmodic ejaculations, he held up a hand to us with a broad smile. I pulled up my heart some inches, and my friend looked hopeful. The clerk brought an interminable waiting list, and with a flourish scratched out a name near the beginning of it, and registered my name to leave by the "Kaga Maru" from Kobe on March 22. A suspected enemy had been detained.

Then came a fortnight of farewells and anticipations. My Keio students entertained me in a restaurant, not now as their *sensei* (Professor) but as a fellow writer. They and a wider circle spent a happy evening with me in the home of a patron of the arts (a Russian dignitary married to a Grecian noblewoman), when my reputation was exalted by the insistence of a black cat on occupying my knees.

Two Japanese girls called to say goodbye. I had not seen them before; but with perfect frankness they told me they were lovers of my poetry, and therefore of its author. They had come to recite two short poems of my own that they had seen in the monthly journal of the Young Party. Among corded boxes labelled for Colombo and Madras one of them stood up and made offering for the two, in perfect expression with a voice like a temple bell sounding out of the Fujiware era a thousand years before, when the influence of woman was dominant in art and life. No gift of the many that came to me moved me more deeply than that of my own best given back to me through an instrument that was, as was her comrade, a personification of delicate beauty and transparent purity.

An evening party was in the flat over the Salvation Army. In another flat on the upper floor, an Englishman and his wife lived. They had spent a lonely life in another country, and in a mutual search for what they could accept as truth had come on Theosophical literature. The casual hearing of a familiar

word had opened doors, and they joined the Lodge, and added their crockery to that of the teachers for the party.

I left Tokyo on March 21. The entire staff of the club, who had been more friends than servants, escorted me from Keio to the railway station, each as a last service carrying one of a pile of articles that cold-weather travel required. At the station a crowd of well-wishers added to problems of packing by cluttering up my compartment with gifts—a box for a lady's use, black-lacquered and exquisitely ornamented; a coffee-set in the Satsuma manner; a set of line-versions of famous paintings with biographies of the artists; and others. I made an overnight stop at Kyoto, in the knacky home of a Japanese teacher of English, in order to fill my eleventh deal-wood case with typical objects of art from that old centre of Japanese rulership. Gurcharn Singh, a Sikh artist in porcelain, joined me and piloted me on a side-trip to the former capital, Nara, and across fields to the fountain-head of Japanese culture—the temple of Horiyujii, where Indian idealism entered the Japanese imagination in the seventh century through the introduction of Buddhist thought and art. In the *Kondo* (Golden Hall) priceless examples of the early craftsmanship of Japan were treasured. Frescoes painted by Korean artists trained by masters of the Ajantan method were still visible. These gave us an aesthetical satisfaction of a more intimate kind than the colossal bronze-plate Buddha that had impressed us at Nara. There was something deeply moving in being in the presence of the beginnings, thirteen centuries before, of an art-impulse that had passed its characteristics of reverence and delicacy on from generation to generation.

At noon on March 22 the "Kaga Maru" started down the Inland Sea for the coaling port of Moji. Here we lay a day and a night in a racket of steam-winchies and the gloom of a wet and windy day. In sleepless hours I walked up and down the deck while a multitude of recollections arranged and disarranged themselves in a kaleidoscope of thought. Life was moving on—I wondered whither. Out there, in the darkness, was a being; *Dai nippon* (Great Japan) it called itself in moments of relapse from its true greatness to the borrowed braggadocio of wealth

and power that was foreign to the real spirit of the Orient. Yet in that being there was the power of renunciation and the wealth of a tradition of taste. These things I counted as fundamentals. But across the "rising sun," which was the hieroglyph of the nation, I seemed to see the trace of a cloud, drawn up from the marshes of ambition and egotism and envy at whose margin I had occasionally paused in apprehension, outside the topography of my concerns. The rising sun might dispel the cloud—but it might not.

At Hong Kong the currents of history moved around me. Mr. Manuk, who had been most friendly on my journey to Japan, came aboard in the roadstead and took me ashore for a day's outing. In the launch that took us ashore he showed me a letter that had decided our doings for some hours. It was signed "T. F. Wu". The name of Dr. Wu Ting Fang had been known to me as that of the author of a brilliant book on his experiences abroad, during which he had been Chinese Ambassador to the United States of America, and had won high admiration for his capacities as a jurist and diplomat, and warm friendship for his personal charm, unimpeachable life and intellectual qualities. On my way to Japan I had gathered from Mr. Manuk that Dr. Wu, who had led the revolt against external rule, and had been the first to cut off and throw away the hair-plait (pig-tail) that had been the sign of subserviance, was an enthusiastic member of the Theosophical Society, and, even in high offices of State, made no secret of his desire to have the new free China rebuilt on the foundation of Brotherhood, the first Object of the Society. And here he was in Hong Kong, waiting to see me! He had been made responsible for the disbursement of the revenue of the Republic. His idea of his duty and his ideal of Brotherhood did not harmonise with demands on the State Treasury for funds on which the still potent pugnacity of a military group in Canton wanted to make war on a group in a neighbouring area. As money could only be obtained over his signature, he vanished from Canton, and was on his way to northern China where threats against him would be futile. His entourage wanted him to hurry on out of danger ;

but when he heard from Manuk that I would pass through a day or two later he put them in a panic by declaring his intention to remain where he was until he saw his brother from his spiritual home at Adyar.

We went some distance up a funicular railway, walked round a number of corners, and were admitted under scrutiny to a tall house that appeared to be doing its best to look unoccupied. The reception room was large and lofty, and furnished in a heavy style that, Manuk told me, was of northern China. The old statesman (he was born in 1842 and was then 78) received us most warmly. His long black robe and black skull-cap, far from being mournful, as in the western tradition, had a remarkable richness, and gave his smallish build much dignity. There was no preliminary talk. I was put into a Theosophical witness-box; and where verbal answers did not satisfy the acute mind behind the dark eyes in the clean-shaven sallow face of the questioner, paper and pencil were subpoenaed, and I created an amazing number of diagrams that he annexed for his own purposes. At the end of a four-hour session the queer Chinese, Armenian and Irish trinity of searchers was ready for refreshments.

"We have talked a lot today. Tomorrow we shall not be so long; and we shall be very quiet. We shall not discuss; we shall meditate." After an hour's dead silence, which was four times more than my jumpy mind was able for, I began to wonder whether too much speech or too much silence were the severer discipline. Anyhow I had the privilege of both, and a rare contact with an extraordinarily furnished and eager mind, an unveiled intuition, and an uncompromising humanitarianism. He intended, he said, to spend some time at Adyar before he retired. But treachery forestalled his intention: he died of hardship and exposure in a flight from Canton two years later (1922) at the age of eighty.

I arrived at Colombo, at the other end of India from Calcutta, at 2 a.m. on April 18, 1920. Gretta arrived from Mangalore via Adyar at 8 a.m.—and life began again.

Before and after the opening of the Ashrama friendship was enriched by goings and comings. A two-day visit (August 22-23, 1921) to the Yogi-philosopher, Aurobindo Ghosh, gave me an intimate touch with the long tradition of India. Out of political agitation in Bengal, Sri Aurobindo escaped to the French colony of Pondicherry on the coast of south-east India, and settled for a life of exile, devoted to philosophical, literary, and yogic study and practice. His home soon attracted disciples and visitors, and became recognised as an ashrama in the tradition of the rishis of old. My visit arose mainly out of literary interests. I had read with appreciation a small book of Sri Aurobindo's English verse, and had written an article on it. He had begun a review of my "New Ways in English Literature" with the brief, but sufficing, sentence: "It is not often that literary criticism of the first order is produced in India. 'New Ways in English Literature' is eminently of this class;" and "The Renaissance in India," which, included my preliminary impressions of the revival of Indian painting in Bengal, was made the text of a series of chapters on the same theme by the sage covering a year of the magazine of the Ashrama, "Arya," and published as a book under the same title as mine.

My first visit to Sri Aurobindo, 9 to 10 a.m., was difficult. He left all the talking to me. But my second interview next morning was the other way round: he had presumably taken my measure from my previous day's talk (a risky thing for even a sage to do), and talked for the allotted hour. What he said is as completely forgotten as what I said the previous day; but I retain a flavour of gentleness and wisdom, breadth of thought, and extent of experience that marked him out as one among millions.

After our settling again at Adyar, when the Madanapalle College was closed by a foreign Government that cared more for political overlordship than for real education, friendship was still further enriched by visitors from India and beyond. In August 1922 Sarojini Naidu arrived, ill, to rest in one of the seaside bungalows as guest of the President. A morning delight was to watch the white-haired old mother (A.B.) go slowly by our

windows in her car, with a tray on her knees bearing the paraphernalia of coffee and dainties for the patient. She could have sent it by one of her many willing helpers; but Annie Besant the occultist and psychologist knew that the inner atmosphere of the activities of life was at least as potent as the substantial things; that preparing and serving food with *prem* (affection) was an ingredient whose omission reduced food-values—as its omission vitiated all the activities of life.

During her stay at Adyar, Srimati Sarojini was a magnet to all the local leaders in various departments of life; and we too had chats in which her nimbleness of mind and scintillating repartee disguised the fact that she was ill.

A month later, September 29, 1922, I was almost immersed in hot water through the prejudice of Rabindranath Tagore in favour of poets rather than presidents. I was only two thirds through the official siesta at Leadbeater Chambers, Adyar, after lunch, when a young friend (R. Raghunath Rao) put his head through our open window, and, as if he were announcing either the end of the world or its beginning, whispered hoarsely. "The Poet has come." We (partner and I) jumped into our semi-respectables before the Poet entered our living room, which was curtained from our sleeping room by hand-printed Masulipatam cloths.

The great figure in the door of our living room was in its usual fawn-coloured robe and high biretta-like cap. Above his longish grey beard and the nose of aristocracy he smiled through his clear brown eyes; and in his high voice began a literary and intellectual give-and-take that carried us on from 1.30 to 3.30, when a problem of precedence emerged.

The Saraswati puja (the worship of the culture Goddess through the implements of daily life) was to be held at "Chambers" at 4 o'clock. Mrs. Besant was to attend in the dining-room a couple of doors from ours on the ground-floor. For the world-famous author to be discovered in our room, not in the President's rooms at Headquarters, might raise trouble among her entourage. I thought at high speed; and as soon as I got word of her arrival, I went to her and said, "Mother,