

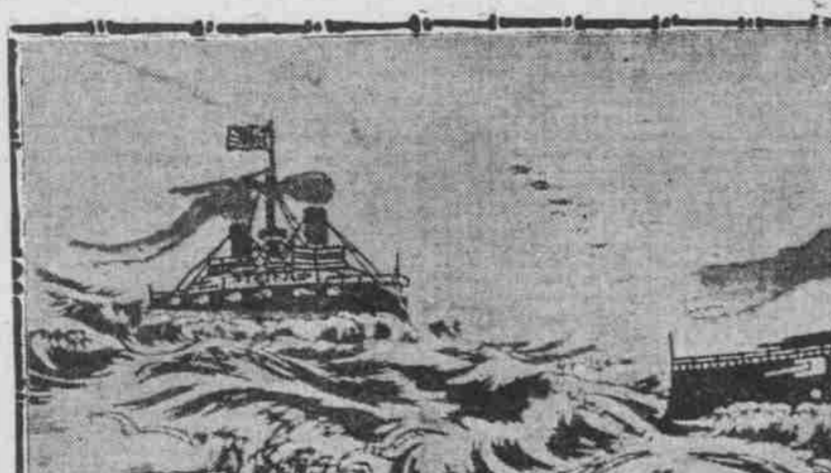
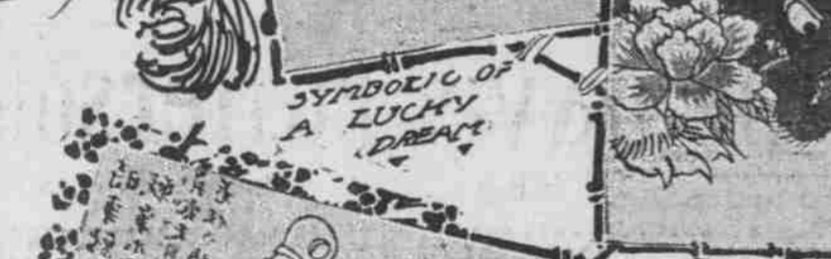
JAPANESE LIFE PICTURED ON TOWELS

Unique Display of Useful Linen Imported to Portland and Explained.

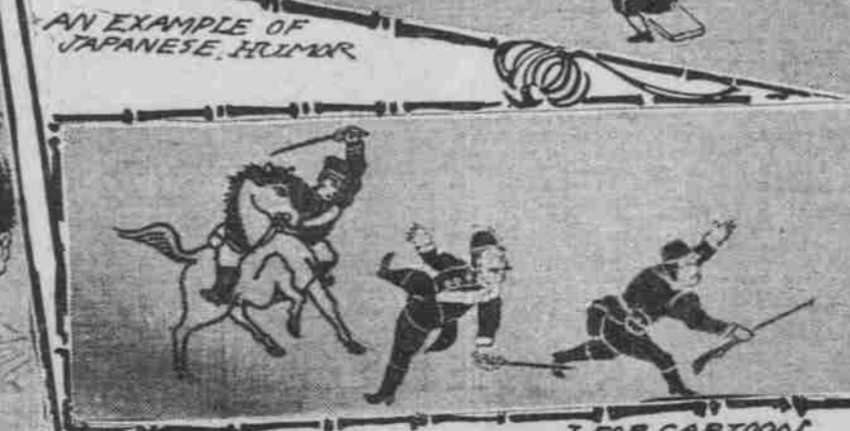
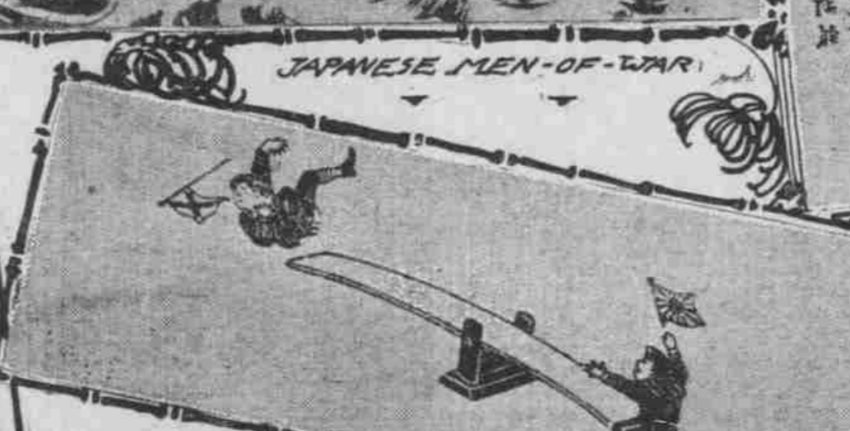
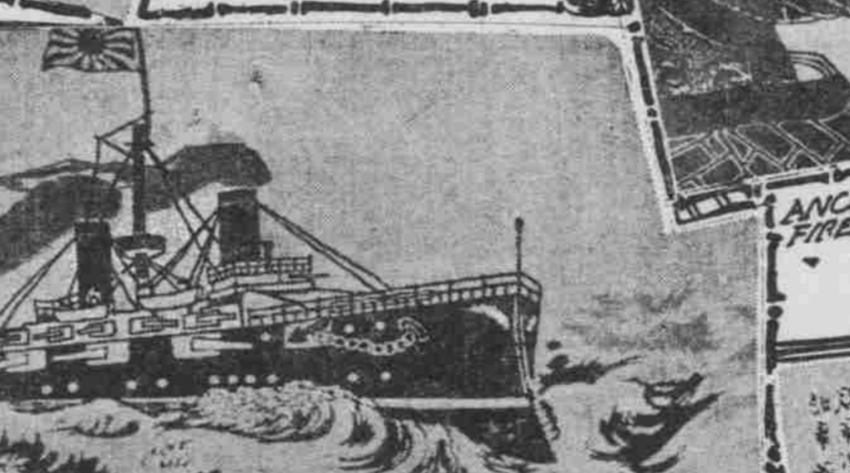


THE present craze for all forms of Japanese art has brought the Japanese towel to the attention of the American public and many who have given the custom and habits of the little brown people no particular attention in the past are now delighted with the discovery that their napery is as quaint from a decorative standpoint as their pottery and other wares. Mrs. Oliver Ellsworth Wood, of Vancouver Barracks, has a collection of Japanese towels which is probably the largest and most complete of any in this country. Colonel Wood was stationed in Japan for four years, living there during the Russo-Japanese war, and his long residence gave Mrs. Wood an excellent opportunity to make her collection unusually complete, both as to numbers and variety of designs. At the meeting of the Unitarian Women's Alliance last Wednesday afternoon Mrs. Wood exhibited her prized collection and in a delightful informal talk told those present of the significance of the various emblems and cartoons with which the towels are decorated. The towels of Japan are made of soft cotton cloth and are decorated in printed designs, most of the emblems used being of legendary or historical significance, although many of them are clever cartoons on current events of the day connected with their empire. They are unhemmed and without fringe, and the bright colors with which they are printed being from the practical American housewife such expressions as "they will fade"—"they will never launder well." But the wise little Japanese knows his business well and when he manufactures towels to order—for everything of that kind is made to order in Japan—he uses dyes that are known to be absolutely fast, and it is not unusual to see three or four colors on one design.

All Designs Mean Something.
Bright blue is the color used most extensively, for the reason that it is the best dye for laundering, although reds, purples, browns, black, salmon and other tints are almost as universally used. The cost of a towel is 3 or 4 cents, according to the design, and sometimes cheaper or more expensive. One can buy them in strips of five, ten or fifteen, and they are being sold in fives or multiples of five instead of by the dozen. Lines of them are frequently hung in temples by those who have received some favor from the gods and who take this method of expressing their thankfulness and appreciation, the design being drawn for the special occasion by one of the many towel artists who do a big business in each city. The towel traffic is engaged in by all classes, from coolies to the aristocracy, and the designs used on them by all people, from the lowest to the highest, show the charming simplicity of Japanese character. The Japanese love little things if they mean something—and practically everything in Japan does mean something. The significance attached to the most unimportant objects and the meaning which can be gotten by them from a print or carving of it is in itself a lesson worthy of emulation by other nationalities. In addition to beautiful symbols of flowers, birds, fish and animals, there is the subtle satire and broad humor of many of their designs to be considered, for the Japanese are a humorous people and love a joke as well as any other nationality. To them the dragon is the demon of the storm, and they picture the tempest both in air and water as the elements agitated by this monster. The bamboo signifies uprightness and usefulness, while both the pine and stork are symbolic of long life, the former generally being spoken of as overlasting youth. New Year's souvenirs usually have designs which include both the pine and stork, the latter supposed to indicate 1000 years of life. A towel for a New Year's greeting would not be looked on as exactly esoteric in America, but the gaily printed banner-shaped piece of cloth which the Japanese sends his friend or neighbor seems particularly fitting for such an occasion, and one who did not know that it was a towel would never dream that it was intended to dry my lady's face and hands. It would probably take a good deal of training for the average American citizen to become accustomed to drying himself after his morning tub with black and red stork, a brilliantly colored man-of-war, or the fanciful reproduction of a tai or carp, but the little brown people prefer this artistic decoration to the monotonous plain white of the American linen, and as to fringes—well, what does fringes mean to them if the towel itself is absolutely plain, with no emblem of happiness and long life, or of bravery, uprightness, perseverance, or the thousand and one things they can teach their children? The war with Russia is well illustrated in cartoon on the collection owned by Mrs. Wood. A number of them are of special interest, and show to a nicety the exquisite humor of this clever race. One, which is reproduced here—that of the changes of expression of Admiral



Makaroff's face as he received the news of the first naval battle, and entitled, "He did not believe that Japan would fight"—is as clever a cartoon as one would wish on such a subject. The artist makes even the hair tell the tale of chagrin and surprise. Another illustrates the plight of the Russian Admirals when Togo captured their fleet while they were ashore at the theater. On one side the Russians are laughing at the performance on the stage, while on the other the Japanese soldiers are laughing at the coup they have employed. "Diver" Makaroff receiving reports from his ships at the bottom of the sea is cleverly illustrated by a single file of fish coming up from the deep, reports in hands. Many designs indicating the victory of the Japanese are used on these towels, the Japanese flag being shown and the Russians scurrying away. The carp is significant of perseverance and strength and all that is desirable in man-



hood, and it is used exclusively as the symbol of Boys' day, which falls on the third day of the third month of each year. The carp, overcoming all obstacles, swims upstream, even jumping waterfalls to reach its spawning bed at the top, and this principle is drilled into the boys of Japan from boyhood. On Boys' day all cities are profusely decorated with carp made of paper or silk, the girls distended so that they fill with air and look very natural. Great strings of them are hung in front of every residence and Japan

ly desired by them. "They look more like pin cushions tumbling about than wrestlers," said Mrs. Wood in describing this design. There are many beautiful souvenirs of the Osaka Exposition in the collection, among these being one of the great bronze bell of Osaka, which was made of popular subscriptions of gold, silver and copper coin, and which is the largest bell in the world, made in a single casting.

names of three Russian officers, Alexieff, Kropotkin and Makaroff, form a Japanese word which means death. "A-Ki-Ma," it would be pronounced, and it was used freely during the war in referring to the Russians, but after one of these Admirals died an honorable death it was never heard in public or seen in print again. The Japanese are polite even under the most strenuous circumstances. The satirical and humorous emblems, while popular with the masses, are not as generally so as those pertaining to the legendary and historical events of the empire. As stated before, everything means

something to the Japanese, and as a rule that meaning is something beautiful. There is seldom more than one snow storm during the winter, and it has become a great custom to make the trip to the famous avenue of cherry trees at Mukojima to see the snow on the cherry trees, this being considered a very beautiful sight. A scene of this kind is depicted on one of the towels. Windows on the Sumida River and other beautiful scenes are also in great favor. Mrs. Wood considers one of the most unique things observed in Japan the shadows seen on the paper screens which form the little houses in which the natives live. After the lights are lit in the evening, and before the wooden shutters are put up for the night, the silhouettes on the screens give an idea of the family life and are quaint almost to the point of being grotesque. "And when it comes time to put up the shutters," she said, "one never heard such a clatter, for there are hundreds of thousands going up at one time in a city of such large population as Tokio."

Every occasion of any public interest or importance is the signal for the appearance of new towels, with new designs, and they are eagerly purchased as souvenirs and for general household use. Those which Mrs. Wood brought home which are purchased in various parts of the province and represent many gala events. Some of them are daintily hemstitched by her little Japanese maids, but the majority of them remain as purchased, with unfinished edges.

The Great Uncertainty.
Melanburgh Wilson in New York Sun Monday, planted rye and melons. On this peasant's plot of excess. But the seeds, smothering labels. Came up mangier and beans. Tuesday, planted Boss Thief Jimmy. On the very plainest proof; Boys allowed that he would surely be an imp with cloven hoof. Wednesday, planted Deacon Jackson; Parson figured out all right. He would surely be an angel. With some wisps of thy white. Now I've got a little notion. And a startling thought it brings—'Sowing Jimmy and the Deacon. Mix like other planted things!

The legend of the frog and bumblebee is given on one, signifying that no matter how stable and substantial one may be a very little thing can often upset that stability. Many specimens of family crests are used on towels, like the English coat of arms, being chosen for their significance. Others are beautiful with wisteria, cherry blossoms, iris, dragon flies. One has a lion and a peony, sym-

looks as though it had been suddenly transplanted to the bottom of the sea. The towel picturing the famous wrestlers will interest many from the unusual size of the combatants. Wrestlers are chosen there because of their size and tendency to flesh, and having been selected for the honor, they are literally stuffed with food, that they may grow to great size. If they please any member of the royalty in their exhibitions, they are presented with richly embroidered aprons, trophies great-

ly desired by them. "They look more like pin cushions tumbling about than wrestlers," said Mrs. Wood in describing this design. There are many beautiful souvenirs of the Osaka Exposition in the collection, among these being one of the great bronze bell of Osaka, which was made of popular subscriptions of gold, silver and copper coin, and which is the largest bell in the world, made in a single casting.

boile of strength and perseverance. A calender is an odd affair, having such a mixture or variety of designs that a foreigner is quite at a loss to understand what it all means. "The Song of the Soldiers" is depicted by a cannon surrounded by gunners, while another interesting design contains a Samurai helmet and sword, lightning and clouds and cherry blossoms, the latter indicating young soldiery. Eight beautiful screens of Tokio are reproduced on one towel, while another is a gorgeously colored affair, containing a print of Katokyo Masa, an ancient Japanese warrior, who conquered Korea in the 17th century. He is surrounded by thunder and lightning. The floral pieces are most admired, especially the chrysanthemums, iris, wisteria and cherry designs. The triumphant review of the Japanese armies and navy by Field Marshal Marquis Oyama, Admiral Togo and officers is represented by a cherry blossom souvenir. It is told that the first syllables of the

names of three Russian officers, Alexieff, Kropotkin and Makaroff, form a Japanese word which means death. "A-Ki-Ma," it would be pronounced, and it was used freely during the war in referring to the Russians, but after one of these Admirals died an honorable death it was never heard in public or seen in print again. The Japanese are polite even under the most strenuous circumstances. The satirical and humorous emblems, while popular with the masses, are not as generally so as those pertaining to the legendary and historical events of the empire. As stated before, everything means

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