

THE SPIRIT of the JAPANESE FESTIVAL

Religious Celebrations Are Much Like the American Fourth of July.

One Night in the Year When the Living Mingle With Their Beloved Dead.

YOKOHAMA, Japan, Sept. 25.—(Special Correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—The average Japanese makes of a religious festival just what the American small boy makes of the Fourth of July, a day of feasting and noise. It isn't his country's independence that the small boy cares about, it is the firecrackers, the "plug uglies," the ice-cream and lemonade, the skyrocket and Roman candles; and so with the Japanese on a religious holiday the cause of the festival is soon lost sight of in the hilarious celebration.

On the 15th of this month there was a festival for the edicts near the Shrine of O. San in the district of the town.

Long ago where Yokohama now stands there was only a marshy stretch of land which no one could cultivate until a timber dealer took the matter in hand, planning a long dike to surround the swamp, which was to be filled with earth. Seven times he tried and failed, so a consultation was held of all those interested, and it was decided that the spirits of the place were angered and that they must be appeased by raising a "human post," that is, by sealing a person alive in a box, sinking the box in the earth, and putting a post above to mark the spot. Obviously, to their superstitious minds, that was the only thing to do; but no one would volunteer and Kimbel was in despair. Then O. San, an orphan servant girl of his to whom he had been kind, stepped forward, and begged him to sacrifice her. "I am glad to offer myself for your sake," she said, "and for the good of all. Your sorrow is more painful to me than death, and your joy my heaven. Do not hesitate to bury me, but complete your work." O. San was buried and the work prospered and was completed finally in 1553. Kimbel erected a shrine to her spirit, and every year a festival is held in honor of O. San, who gave her life willingly so long ago. Poor little O. San! She was only 18 and it is good to be alive when one is 18.

A Holiday Crowd.

One walked through a street of the village in the evening and saw evidences of the celebration: men unsteady with sake carrying boughs over their shoulders, little boys dressed in bright clothes with white bands tied about their heads and faces painted white and red with wisps of black mustache that made them look like tiny men, young men dressed as women, and most of the women and children of the households, thronging in the streets. We met a crowd of half-drunken coolies, shouting and leaping, as they came down the narrow street bearing a sacred palanquin which supposedly contained the spirit of a deity. At every corner stood a cart, with a platform built above where musicians were pounding drums and preparing for a sacred dance. Some of these carts were elaborately decorated with flowers and trees and life-size figures of historical personages. Everywhere were red paper lanterns to light the scene.

The local festival set me to remembering others much more picturesque that I had seen before, and that sticks in my mind still as if they were events of yesterday.

Feast of Lanterns.

The prettiest festival I have seen in Japan was the Bon Matsuri, the "Feast of Lanterns," which I saw in July, 1900, in Nagasaki. It is celebrated, I believe, throughout Japan, but nowhere else so enthusiastically as in Nagasaki. Nagasaki Bay, which is considered one of the prettiest harbors in the world, is about three miles long by one mile and a quarter broad, shut in by high hills. The houses of the foreigners are above the Japanese settlements on the steep hillside, so situated that they command a fine view of the harbor. All about on the hills among the houses and the terraced gardens are hundreds of little graveyards, filled with gray tombstones. During the festival time thousands of lanterns are hung high on poles in the graveyards, and at night the hillside about the bay is almost covered with the globes, shining golden in the dark, and making an unforgettable glowing picture. The people go to the graves of their dead to let and be merry, standing far into the night entertaining the lonely spirits who are supposed to return to earth for two nights with an undiminished zest for human joys. On the last night at midnight the spirits return and straw boats are built and lighted and launched in the bay to convey them back to ghostland.

That night we went down on the bund and became lost in a procession of men and boys, rushing frantically along, bearing little boats and big boats made of straw and paper, and lighted by candles. The crowd shouted and shouted as they ran, and the noise was deafening. We walked and walked, but did not come to the launching place, so turned back to our bungalow. An army officer who was with us attracted the attention of a lad, who immediately consulted himself the long-lost brother of our party. Now we were content with that. The next morning while the other members of the household were writing to their husbands who were in North China fighting Boxers, and I was sitting on the veranda watching the shipping in the busy bay, our long-lost brother appeared and talked to me.

An Interesting Little Jap.

He talked of the Boxer war, and of the coming war between Russia and Japan, and why it would have to be fought, and how Japan was preparing for it, and how many soldiers his country had; then he asked for the officer of the evening before. Was the officer my master?

"No," I said, "no have got master."

He looked puzzled, but politely continued the conversation on the subject of "Mr. Emperor and Mrs. Emperor."

Then suddenly, "Four master officer?"

"No got any."

"Yes, have got," he insisted, nodding his head.

And to my question, "Why do you think so?" he replied gravely:

"American girl no got master, hair pigtail, same his Chinaman; have got master, hair this fashion," and he wound his hand around on the back of his head to imitate a coil. Nothing, I felt, but braids a la Topsy would convince him, so we talked again of war. I've wandered from the subject of festivals, but memories of the lad always came back with memories of the Bon Matsuri, and I wonder if the war-loving little fellow fought for "Mr. Emperor" against the Russians in the struggle that has come since.

Commemorating Christian Expulsion

Nagasaki is particularly interesting to foreigners for it was the gate by which European civilization, or rather those important parts of it—religion, firearms and commerce—first entered Japan. The Portuguese priests came in 1542, and later the Spanish friars. Christianity spread until it was looked upon by the Govern-



THE NIKKO NEATSURE— THE PROCESSION COMING DOWN THE AVENUE FROM THE TEMPLE



A FLOAT USED IN A KIOTO FESTIVAL

ment as a menace to its power, and there followed religious persecution, civil war, massacres and a final driving out in 1637 of all the Christians. In commemoration of this event, the Japanese still hold every year in October a festival called the Odori. The temple services on the first day we did not see, but on the second day we went to the Governor's house, and on the third day to the Mayor's to see the dancing and the sports. There was a pavilion of mats built above the street, and here we sat watching the

figures, was carried by a man walking slowly and turning with a slow, measured step, that all might see and admire not only the wonderful thing that he carried, but also his wonderful skill in keeping his balance. Then coolies came, putting down temporary platforms in the street. More coolies came, running, bearing little pavilions, and out stepped geishas, beautifully gowned in kimono of soft-toned crepe. Musicians came to play the koto and drum, to sing and clap little wooden blocks on the platform to mark time.

The geisha danced and sang; high, piercing singing, distressing to foreign ears, and slow dancing that was simply posturing with the body, and a rhythmic waving of the hands and arms. Then it was all whisked away, and another ward came forward with its umbrella, its stage and orchestra and performers. There were tiny girls who danced the fan dance, the cherry dance and dances where they waved long pieces of bright cloth; there were wrestling matches by little boys and girls; there was a Satsuma dance by

small boys; there were plays; bits from history, with actors wearing gorgeous costumes; music of the great Japanese background of artificial scenery. The actors diminished in size as the drama went on, for they appeared wearing all of their costumes at once, and shedding them gradually before our astonished eyes. People filled the street, staying, as we did, to watch the brilliant spectacle until the sunny October afternoon grew into dusk.

Finest Shrines in Japan. Last year in June we had the good fortune to see the festival at Nikko, Nikko, as you probably know, is one of the most sacred places in Japan. Here, under giant cryptomerias, are the finest shrines in the land, a wonder of red lacquer and carving, and here are buried Leyasu, the great lawgiver and statesman, and his grandson Temitsu, who had their turn as virtual rulers of Japan some 300 years ago. The inner shrine in the Temple of Leyasu is opened only once a year, when an impressive ceremony is performed. We sat outside on the temple steps and watched the priests, all gowned in beautiful brocades and gauzes and wearing black gauze caps curiously out and stiffened, as they knelt and chanted and murmured long prayers to music that sounded like the wailing of lost souls. The golden doors of the inner shrine were opened and trays of food were placed inside for the refreshment of Leyasu's spirit while we, with the group of foreigners on the steps, sat silent and oppressed by the solemnity of the service. As we went back past the treasure-house of the temple, we saw groups of villagers receiving from the priests swords, spears, guns, helmets, armor and masks of the old feudal days, which the people of the village were to wear the next day in the procession. The procession was most interesting for the villagers wore the oldtime costumes with evident pleasure. Men carried sacred trees, others carried high banners, there were troops of drummers, and archers with long bows and quivers, spearmen, warriors, falconers, nobles, lion masks, Shinto priestesses, Shinto priests on horseback, monkeys with their trainers, and small boys dressed as monks. Last came three great "mikashi," or portable shrines, each borne by 75 half-exhausted men. It was supposed that the shrines contained for the time being the spirit of Leyasu and of two other heroes of the feudal days.

Here in Yokohama the Japanese have taken to themselves our Fourth of July celebration, though, I fancy, none of them could tell you why we celebrate the day. On the night of "the Fourth" nearly all of the Americans dine at the Grand Hotel, bands play, the bund is decorated, and fireworks are set off in the harbor. At dusk the bay is a mass of companies, boats and barges crowded with Japanese and so decorated with lanterns that the effect is like fairyland.

The Japanese love a festival just as much as the American small boy loves the noise and joy of his Fourth of July; and who can measure the depth of that feeling?

ANNIE LAURIE MILLER.

Actors Are Tied to Certain Parts

"RIP VAN WINKLE" has been played more than 12,000 times. "Monte Cristo," that old man of the sea of which James O'Neil has tried for years to rid himself, has a record of several thousand performances. In England Charles Warren has played the terrifying melodrama "Drink" almost as often as O'Neil in this country; he has impersonated the heroic and affluent Edmond Dantes, Joseph Murphy has played "Stauben Rue" and "Kerry Gow" so often that he has lost count of the exact number of times, and a host of other examples might be brought forward to prove that it is just about as difficult for an actor to shake his own shadow as it is for him to quit playing a part in which he has met with unusual success.

Nobody knows this better than William H. Crane. While he has not been identified with one particular part to the exclusion of others, as O'Neil, for instance, has been, he has become identified with a particularly narrow line of parts, from which he has found it impossible to escape. He plays better than any man on the stage the part of a good-hearted business man who likes to give away money. In such parts he has had steady and unvarying success. One year he got the idea that he owed it to his art to broaden out. So he got a play that had been a great success in Paris and he made it one of the greatest failures in this country. That was "Business is Business." Now he is playing typical "Crane parts" again.

Was Goodwin, that prime comedian with the sunny locks and the sunny smile, he, too, has had his lesson. He now knows enough to give the public what it has been accustomed to. After years of high success as a comedian, he was impelled by an ambition that was stronger than it was wise to play "Shylock." Also he played Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and between the two Shakespeares plays he contrived to lose a big bunch of money. He got none of it back in another venture called "The Beauty and the Beast," which, while it had succeeded in London, did not go here at all. While Goodwin was losing steadily, his wife, Maxine Elliott, was improving just as steadily. Goodwin in despair cast about for something that could be whipped into a real old-fashioned "Goodwin part" with which he could win back his following. He found it in "The Genius," which Harry Woodruff had played earlier with the same leading woman, Edna Goodrich. Now Goodwin is "packing them in," and vows that he won't try any more innovations.

Actors Are Tied to Certain Parts

Joe Jefferson yielded gracefully when he found that the public wanted "Rip" more than it wanted anything else he could do. He engaged a small, inexpensive company and played "Rip" and made a large fortune. His son, with a company that doesn't surpass his father's in expense or size, is trying to make his "Rip" as popular as the elder Jefferson's. If he succeeds he has a steady income for life with little labor.

Kate Claxton had a hard time getting away from "The Two Orphans," and there are certain sections of this country where it is believed that nobody has ever played or ever can play the lead in "East Lynne" except Ada Gray. Once established as a favorite in a certain part or a certain line of parts, an actor or an actress can look forward through the years with a certainty of knowledge that year after year the money is waiting to be taken in and that no unusual bursts of labor are needed to get that money.

The actor who is not firmly established as a household word must fret and fume with this part and that, but the old-timer goes along with no worries at all except those fallacious ones that come from making too much money too easily.—Chicago Tribune.