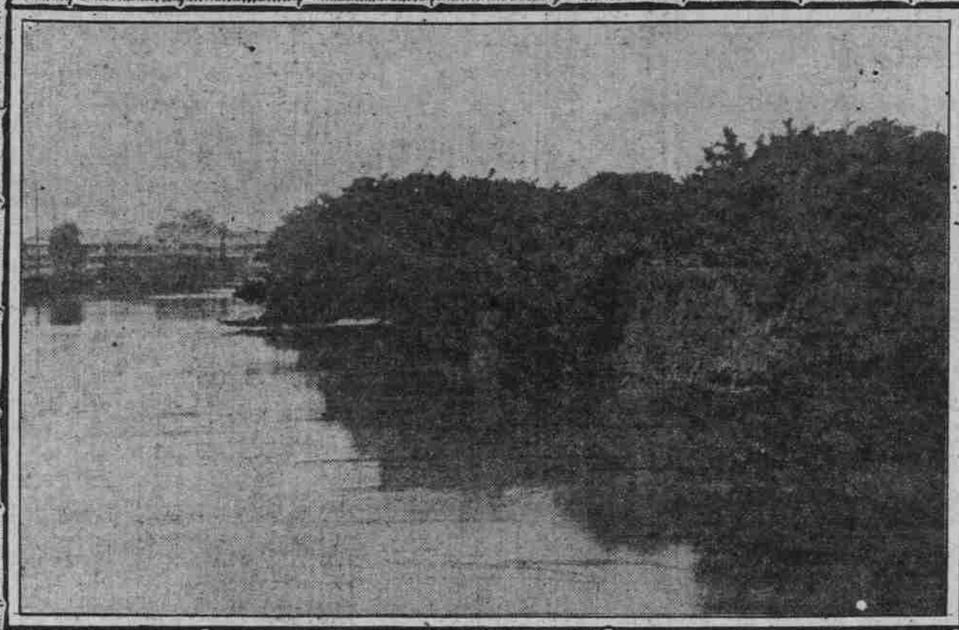
OLD JAPAN AND NEW IN CONTRAST

Annie Laura Miller Writes of Today's Activities at the National Capital



MOAT AT TOKYO

THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN SOME YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE ELECTRIC CARS WERE RUNNING IN THE CAPITAL

BY ANNIE LAURA MILLER.

THE chief impression that a dweller in Yokohama, seventeen miles from the capital, has of Tokyo, is miles and miles stretching in every direction, of little gray houses and shops; and secondary to that is the impression of a city made up of things mediaeval and modern: the old moat and watch towers about the palace, the old gardens, the new wide streets and public buildings and electric cars, the people dressed, some of them in the costumes of their forefathers and others dressed in the latest European style.

The train entering Tokyo comes first to Shinagawa, a suburb overlooking the artificial old forts out in the bay, then goes through the outskirts of the city, passing a modern match factory and other manufacturing buildings with chimneys made of thin iron to withstand earthquake shocks—for an earthquake center is out in Tokyo bay—then passing two Imperial gardens, it pulls into the station. There is a deafening clatter and scraping of wooden shoes on the pavement, a pause at the wicket and one is out stepping into a ricksha or a decrepit Victoria ordered beforehand from the stables.

It is a block to the Ginza, the wide main street, and here, looking at the many electric cars and foreign buildings, one fancies oneself back in America for a moment, only to lose the delusion when the glance strays to rickshas filled with Japanese and to carts laden with country produce or to the strange signs in Japanese and distorted English.

There is a big bazaar of Japanese articles, there are photographers, haberdashers, a jeweler's where culture pearls are sold, bicycle and crockery shops, a shop of nothing but coolie towels costing only a few sen each, but with priceless artistic designs printed on them.

Conservatism Run Mad.

There is the shop of the chief grocer of Tokyo, a man with a somewhat mediaeval idea of business, apparently, for he lately refused to keep a certain kind of "tinned biscuits," much liked by his foreign customers, for the simple reason that the demand for them was so great he could never keep them in stock. How the law of supply and demand, dear to the heart of some political economists, would suffer in a nation of such men!

At the end of the Ginza is a Nihombashi, an insignificant bridge, but a celebrated one for in the old days it was reckoned the end of the Tokaido, the great road connecting Tokyo and Kyoto when both cities were capitals. A picture of it is first in Hiroshige's famous set of prints showing the stations of the old road.

Beyond the bridge is the fish market, a busy place in the early morning. Then the little gray shops stretch for miles out toward Uyeno Park. Somewhere in the midst of them is the big shop of the Mitsuis, the wealthiest family in Japan. Here among articles for foreigners are the most exquisite kimono patterns such as Japanese ladies wear and gorgeous obe's, heavy with threads of real gold. And somewhere tucked away in the vast city are ivory carvers and silversmiths, the best in the empire, although the real artistic center of Japan is still Kyoto.

In Officialdom.

Not far away is the Imperial, the big foreign hotel, and in this part of the city are also many of the government buildings, big, rather imposing, foreign structures; the government printing office, the naval department, the judicial department, courts of justice, the foreign office, the ministries of finance, education and interior, headquarters of the general staff and the two houses of the diet, the scene of stormy discussions last week, when the party in favor of military expansion overthrew the party in favor of business expansion, and the premier, Saiouji, himself handed in a resignation that was not accepted.

At the Exclusive Palace.

Nearby is the moat surrounding the huge palace grounds; the wide moat with big old pine trees growing above on the high wall, where are white watchtowers with loop holes for archers, and great iron-bound gates, all impregnated still with the very spirit of the Middle Ages. No foreigners enter the palace except for special audiences, which have been granted during the past two years to men of various interests: Mr. Schiff, General Booth of the Salvation Army, Secretary Taft and others, while the latest guests have been the Chinese prince, Pu Lun, and the little Korean crown prince. This is the oldest part of Tokyo, the site of a castle built in 1456 by a great feudal lord. In 1603 Ieyasu made it his capital and here, while the do-nothing Mikados lived in Kyoto, he and his line ruled the country until the restoration, when the Mikado came from Kyoto and made Tokyo his capital. The Shogun who abdicated then lives still in Tokyo, a hale and hearty old man, who practices archery sometimes with the long-bow in his garden.

With the Aristocrats.

Scattered about not far from the Imperial palace grounds are the residences of Japanese aristocrats, the palaces of Prince Arisugawa and Prince Fushimi of the royal family, and the foreign embassies and legations, big, old-fashioned foreign houses, most of them, that would make American architects and plumbers throw up their hands in horror. There are not enough houses to go around the official circle, the Swedish minister and some members of the Russian embassy live in Yokohama and go back and forth by train, while some members of other embassies live in Japanese houses furnished and heated in European style. Once, soon after the war, the betto, driving us about for a round of calls, pointed out to us Admiral Togo's home, a simple Japanese house with a little garden hid behind a high wall.

There is in another part of the city a small foreign settlement, called by the irreverent "Holy Land," made up of a hospital, a school, a church and the homes of some missionaries and teachers. The foreigners in Tokyo are only an insignificant part of the two million inhabitants of the city.

Parks That the People Use.

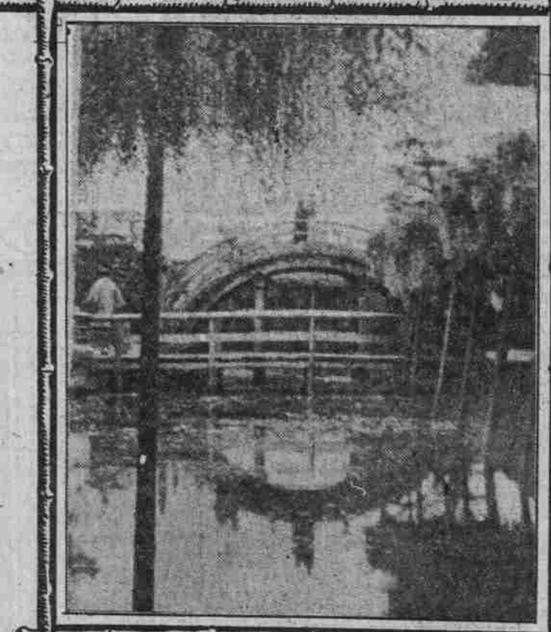
Tokyo has several public parks. Hibiga, the scene of the riots soon after the signing of the Portsmouth treaty, is rather a bare and unattractive spot, interesting chiefly because it is a sort of playground for the youth of the city, who swarm there to play their favorite game of baseball. Uyeno is the most popular park with the common people, who go there to walk under the cherry trees that turn to rosy pink clouds when the April sun is warm. The spot was set apart for temple grounds in 1625 and a magnificent temple was built there to ward off evil demons from the palace, for the ground lies to the northeast of the palace, the direction by which demons come when they have foul designs on the souls of men. The temple stood until 1868, when it was burned during the battle that gave the Mikado's followers victory over the followers of the Shogun. Little remains of the former buildings; there is a red pagoda among the cryptomerias, and a picturesque avenue lined with old stone lanterns leads to a shrine dedicated to the spirit of Ieyasu, the greatest of the Shoguns. Beyond is the Imperial museum and beyond that are two small temples and the tombs of six Shoguns.

But the favorite spot with the people is near the statue of Saigo, the successful leader of the Imperial forces in 1868; here they sit at the little tea sheds under the cherry trees and look over the great, gray city spread out before them. In quite another part of the city is Shiba Park with its gorgeous mortuary temples and tombs of the Shoguns, under gnarled and ancient pine trees. One gives 20 sen to the custodian priest and enters a temple gorgeous with lacquer and gold, flowers and animals of many colors, with altars ornamented with rich embroideries, censers and candlesticks of brass. Behind the temples are the tombs, simple and impressive in their quiet surroundings.

City of Temples.

Kyoto is a city of temples, built when Buddhism was a great power in the land, but Tokyo became the capital too late to be much influenced by Buddhism, and the chief shrine in the city is the simple Shinto temple of Yasukuni, the "Spirit-Invoking Shrine." Here Admiral Togo and his vice-admirals held service for the souls of the comrades, officers and common sailors, slain in the war, addressing them in a moving invocation, as if they were present.

The temple of the lower classes is Asakusa, much more a pleasure resort than a place of worship, so lightly do the populace hold their religion. A street lined with little booths, where cheap bright ornaments and toys are sold leads to the temple yard, and inside the gate are stalls where one may buy rosaries. The dingy hall of the temple is filled with votive offerings, contrasting strangely with the gorgeous altar which is protected by a wire netting from the flocks of pigeons that flutter about. The temple grounds swarm with people, men, women and children, pausing at the tea sheds or going on to some of the many shows, to have a photograph taken, to wander through the menageries and feed carrots to the monkeys, to watch the trained birds perform, to see wrestlers and tumblers or to watch the skeleton dance at the clever puppet show.



KAMEIDO

Pray a Little, Play a Little.

A wonderful place, Asakusa, where the people pray a little and play a little and go home weary after a pleasant day. The Nishi-Hongwanji is different—a new temple, very spacious, very dignified, with a religious atmosphere about it that lowers even the unbeliever's voice to a whisper as he walks forward to see the altar. A favorite spot with the people is the temple inclosure, where the Forty-Seven Romies are buried. It is in a quiet spot in Shinagawa, away from the noise of the city, that the Forty-Seven lie, "brave men and true," who died for their lord; and the people flock there by the hundreds to worship and burn incense. In another part of Tokyo, in a cemetery attached to a small temple, is the grave of Hokusai, "the old man mad with painting."

Floral Festivals.

Then there are the flower gardens and festivals, dear to the Japanese. Tokyo has been burned so many times that there is a saying that "Fire is the flower of Yedo," but there are real flowers, too, in their season. There is the Imperial cherry blossom garden party, given in the grounds of the Summer palace, and there is the Imperial chrysanthemum party, given when the maple leaves turn red in the grounds surrounding the palace of the Crown Prince. These are for foreign and Japanese officials and visitors.

Every Autumn Count Okuma issues invitations to a garden party in his chrysanthemum garden in the outskirts of Tokyo. Count and Countess Okuma receive their guests at the entrance to a restful Japanese bit of garden, then the guests pass on to look at the flowers and to have tea in a pavilion.

Every Spring all Tokyo goes to see the wistaria at Kameido, to sit under the vines drinking tea, to clamber over the half-moon bridges or simply to gaze by the hour at the long streamers of flowers that hang overhead and are reflected in the pond below. There is a peony show, too, each Spring, of flowers wonderful in color and shape, of a beauty that makes our sturdy garden peonies common and unattractive by comparison. There are other flower shows and festivals, for the Japanese never lose an opportunity to linger over flowers and trees.

The theater is a great diversion of the middle class Japanese. They go and spend the day with their families, eating and sitting for hours packed in little boxes, watching the stage intently, weeping with the unhappy characters and laughing with the happy ones. At the Meijaza not long ago we saw a thrilling melodrama, translated from the French and adapted—a sort of semi-foreign play—far too full of morbid and bloodthirsty situations to suit our taste, but thoroughly enjoyed by the Japanese audience.

Another time at the Kabukiza we saw a lovely, allegorical little opera in one act. It formed part of the theatrical performance given afterward by Baron Goto—one of the ablest of Japan's statesmen—in honor of Prince Pu Lun. Diplomats and aristocratic Japanese formed the audience that evening. It was one of the few times that people of the higher class have attended the theater, which was forbidden them in the old days.

Scant Entertainment of Diplomats.

Diplomats who have lived at European courts say that nowhere else in the world are the foreign representatives received so little at court as in Japan. There are the two garden parties, but the only day when the diplomatic corps goes in a body to court is on New Year's morning. Then they are formally received, given light refreshments and each person present is given a small lacquered box containing candy. On the 3d of November, the birthday of the Emperor, Count and Countess Hayashi, of the Foreign Office, give a ball. It is a brilliant spectacle. This year the third fell on Sunday, so the members of the British and American embassies, true to their religious training, did not dance in the court quadrille, with which the ball opened; only the other European diplomats and their wives danced with the Japanese princesses.

When distinguished foreign officials come to Tokyo they are entertained with tiffins and dinners, given at the Imperial Hotel, and with Japanese feasts and geisha dancing at the Maple Club; some few are entertained at the palaces, but they are seldom invited into the homes of Japanese officials. Not long ago Admiral and Madam Ijuin gave a big reception at the Naval Club, the genial Admiral going about from table to table toasting his guests, while Lieutenants and Captains of the navy served them.

Tokyo is an interesting capital, with its mixture of old and new, of Japanese and European, and one might spend a lifetime there learning to know it thoroughly.

Yokohama, Japan, January 20.

Her Leapyear Privilege

LEAP year has come around once more and everything looks promising for a big crop of regulation jokes. Susceptible young men who have been respectfully (and otherwise) declined during the last three years like to talk now about their slim prospect of eluding capture.

Of course nobody ever knew of girls proposing in years divisible by four, any more than in those divisible by three or five. But that makes no difference. The subject is too good a one for the joke maker to abandon. It has been his property for hundreds of years anyhow and that gives him some rights.

According to tradition it was no less a personage than St. Patrick himself who conferred what is commonly known as the leap year privilege on women. And it was St. Bridget who beguiled him into making the concession.

That takes the origin back to about the year 400, which would seem to give it good deep roots. This is the story as told by the tradition mongers:

One day as St. Patrick was strolling along the shore of Lough Neagh, he was accosted by St. Bridget, who with much weeping and wailing declared that the sisters in her nunnery felt themselves to be deeply abused because they as women had not the privileeg of popping the question. At that time celibacy, although approved by the church as the proper life of a religieuse and consequently made binding on the individual by a private vow, was not enforced by a general and absolute rule for the clergy.

St. Patrick was sternly resolved upon celibacy for himself, but he was so moved by the lamentations of St. Bridget that he offered to help out the nunnery ladies by conceding to them an occasional enjoyment of the privilege of proposing. Being an ecclesiastic, his thoughts naturally turned on groups of seven; so he said they might propose once in seven years.

Seven years! No wonder St. Bridget demurred. A girl who was 14 when one of these privileged years came would be 21 before she would get another chance, and all the best years of her life for that special purpose would be gone. For at that time a woman of 21 was as much a matrimonial antiquity as a woman of 31 is today.

Consequently, so the story goes, St. Bridget threw her arms around St. Patrick's neck and exclaimed:

"Arrah, Pathrick, jewell! I daurn't go back to the gurrls wid sich a proposal. Mek it wan year in four!"

To which the genial saint replied:

"Biddy, acushla, squeeze me that way again and I'll give you leap year, the longest one of the lot!"

Thus encouraged and bethinking her that she herself had no husband St. Bridget forthwith proposed to St. Patrick. But he had taken the vow of celibacy so he had to soften his refusal with a kiss and the present of a silk gown.

"And ever since then," says Walsh, who tells the story in his "Curiosities of Popular Customs," "if a man refuses a leap year proposal he must pay the penalty of a silk gown and kiss."

However, there is a limit to this obligation, for other authorities say that the lady cannot claim the dress unless at the time of the proposal she is "the wearer of a scarlet petticoat, the lower portion of which she must exhibit to the gentleman, who by the law of leap year is compelled to present to the lady the dress which shall cover the petticoat."

This reference to "the law of leap year" is more serious than might be supposed, for it is declared that the custom of women proposing was actually upheld by laws in Scotland, France and Spain, "while in England the custom was so deeply rooted that it needed no laws to uphold it."

In 1228 a law was passed in Scotland making a man liable to a fine of not more than £100 for refusing a woman during leap year, unless he could show that he had proposed to somebody else prior to leap year or had been engaged by some other inquiring woman.

One thing is certain, the 29th of February is more scantily provided with saints than any other day in the year, St. Oswald being the only one in the calendar for that day.