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Japan and the Japanese

Taking advantage of his diplomatic privilege in Japan to travel further and inquire deeper than other foreigners, Swiss envoy Aimé Humbert (1819–1900) brought back stories of life under the Tokugawa shogunate in its final years. First published in the journal *Le Tour du monde* in 1866, his account of Japanese history and daily life was republished as *Le Japon illustré* in 1870. This 1874 English translation brought readers up to date by including additional chapters on the 1868 revolution and its aftermath. Humbert focused his narrative on the history and culture of four locations: Benten, the foreign settlement at Yokohama; Kyoto, where emperors had resided for centuries; Kamakura, the old centre of political power; and Yeddo, now Tokyo, the new capital of Japan. Featuring almost 200 illustrations taken from Humbert's collection of prints and photographs, this book captures descriptively and pictorially a country on the verge of dramatic political and social change.

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Japan and the Japanese

AIMÉ HUMBERT

TRANSLATED BY FRANCES CASHEL HOEY

EDITED BY HENRY WALTER BATES



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JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE.

LONDON :
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
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JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE

ILLUSTRATED.

BY

AIMÉ HUMBERT,

LATE ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

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A DOMESTIC SCENE.

London :

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P R E F A C E.

THE richly-illustrated work on Japan, of which a translation is now offered to the English-reading world, has acquired high estimation on the continent of Europe, for the evident fidelity with which it portrays the scenery of this interesting country, and the varied life of its singular people. Its author, M. Aimé Humbert, obtained his copious material during a residence of two years in the country, in 1863-1864, as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Republic; availing himself of the privilege of travelling outside the barriers of the foreign settlement at Yokohama, a privilege at that time exclusively accorded to diplomatists of the Treaty Powers, to obtain subjects for his pen and pencil in quarters inaccessible to the ordinary inquirer. How genially he appreciated all he saw, and how pleasantly he communicates the knowledge he acquired, will be understood by all readers of the following pages.

M. Humbert relates, in the Introduction to the original French Edition, that he was accompanied in all his peregrinations by a faithful *attaché*; to whom, without mentioning him by name, he wishes to be attributed a portion of the credit of his work. Together, he says, they studied the country and the people, visiting the neighbouring towns, and rambling at all seasons over the pleasant country around the Bay of Yeddo. Armed with their sketching implements and a note-book, they jotted down their observations; sometimes seated at the foot of an ancient cedar; sometimes squatted on the threshold of a rustic tavern; or again, more slyly, intrenched in the back shop of some friendly tradesman, who good-naturedly aided them in their inquiries. A large number of photographs were taken, under M. Humbert's own eye; and he speaks of the treasures, in the way of engravings, Indian-ink sketches, and coloured pictures, all valuable illustrations of the hidden

scenes of Japanese political life and history, which he obtained by frequent visits to the print-shops of Yeddo. A judicious selection from the copious store of material thus obtained formed the pictorial part of his work.

The original French work has passed through two editions: the second, from which the present translation has been made, adds a summary of events in Japan down to the year 1868 to the original narrative. During this interval the great Revolution, which has so profoundly modified the political condition and social life in Japan, took place. A continuation of the narrative, bringing the record down to the summer of 1873, is furnished by the editor of the English Edition.

Such a work must naturally be of deep interest to the people of Great Britain and the United States of America, whose commercial relations with Japan outweigh those of all other nations put together; and the interest will not be lessened by the reflection that the strange life—art, manners, and costumes—so graphically portrayed, is undergoing a rapid change, and will soon be a thing of the past.



COMEDIANS TO THE KISAKI.

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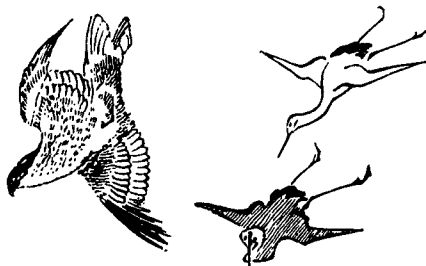
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