

JAPANESE GIRLS AND WOMEN

Press Opinions.

PALL MALL GAZETTE:—

"Miss Bacon's opportunities were unequalled, and she has used them to a result calling for the highest praise. There has hitherto been scarcely anything in print about the lives and thoughts and aspirations and sorrows of Japanese Women worth the paper it covered. Thus the most attractive and remarkable side of Japanese life has remained unappreciated and unexplained, and the world has learned to regard the Japanese Woman—thanks to the writers of the kidney of Pierre Loti—as a creature with the physique of a doll, the intellect of a poodle, and the morals of a grisette. Miss Bacon has changed all this; her book is transparently accurate and extremely interesting. We have no space to follow Miss Bacon in her charming description and stories of upper-class Japanese life, which she has seen so well. We can only say how charming they are."

QUEEN:—

"This gifted authoress, in the making of her book, has had the privilege of long and intimate friendship with a number of Japanese ladies. . . . There are pages, nay, whole chapters, of this book that simply charm. . . . Many professed devotees of Japanese Art would be helped to an intelligent understanding of their subject merely by reading these pages. I hope to find space for a fuller account of a book which I have read with quite unusual interest and pleasure."

MORNING POST:—

"Miss Bacon has no need to offer any excuse for her book on 'Japanese Girls and Women,' considering that in writing on this subject she refers to one half of the population of Japan, which has been almost entirely neglected by other writers. The knowledge displayed in these pages of the inner life of Japanese women is considerable, and shows that the author has had exceptional advantages in being admitted to close friendship with the ladies of the Flowery Land. These she has used with discernment, and gives a faithful description of the position of Japanese Women throughout their lives, and of all classes. The book not only treats of much that has not before been generally known but is written in a pleasing style."

DAILY TELEGRAPH:—

"A graceful little book on a charming subject has been prepared by Miss Alice Mabel Bacon in 'Japanese Girls and Women' The chapters she has penned under these circumstances are delightful . . . Her book ought to be popular and well read for a long time to come."

ACADEMY:—

"Why this particular plot of the Japanese field should have remained so long untilled, it is not difficult to divine. It required the hand of a woman; and few Western women, with the necessary opportunities and inclinations for the study, have resided for sufficient time in the country. . . . A book like the present, is a welcome surprise."

JAPANESE GIRLS AND
WOMEN

BY

ALICE MABEL BACON

SECOND EDITION

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GAY AND BIRD

KING WILLIAM STREET, WEST STRAND

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To
STEMATZ, THE COUNTESS OYAMA,
IN THE NAME OF OUR GIRLHOOD'S FRIENDSHIP, UNCHANGED AND
UNSHAKEN BY THE CHANGES AND SEPARATIONS OF OUR
MATURE YEARS,
This Volume
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

It seems necessary for a new author to give some excuse for her boldness in offering to the public another volume upon a subject already so well written up as Japan. In a field occupied by Griffis, Morse, Greey, Lowell, and Rein, what unexplored corner can a woman hope to enter? This is the question that will be asked, and that accordingly the author must answer.

While Japan as a whole has been closely studied, and while much and varied information has been gathered about the country and its people, one half of the population has been left entirely unnoticed, passed over with brief mention, or altogether misunderstood. It is of this neglected half that I have written, in the hope that the whole fabric of Japanese social

life will be better comprehended when the women of the country, and so the homes that they make, are better known and understood.

The reason why Japanese home-life is so little understood by foreigners, even by those who have lived long in Japan, is that the Japanese, under an appearance of frankness and candor, hides an impenetrable reserve in regard to all those personal concerns which he believes are not in the remotest degree the concerns of his foreign guest. Only life in the home itself can show what a Japanese home may be; and only by intimate association — such as no foreign man can ever hope to gain — with the Japanese ladies themselves can much be learned of the thoughts and daily lives of the best Japanese women.

I have been peculiarly fortunate in having enjoyed the privilege of long and intimate friendship with a number of Japanese ladies, who have spoken with me as freely, and shown the details of their lives to me

as openly, as if bound by closest ties of kindred. Through them, and only through them, I have been enabled to study life from the point of view of the refined and intelligent Japanese women, and have found the study so interesting and instructive that I have felt impelled to offer to others some part of what I have received through the aid of these friends. I have, moreover, been encouraged in my work by reading, when it was already more than half completed, the following words from Griffis's "Mikado's Empire:" —

"The whole question of the position of Japanese women — in history, social life, education, employments, authorship, art, marriage, concubinage, prostitution, benevolent labor, the ideals of literature, popular superstitions, etc. — discloses such a wide and fascinating field of inquiry that I wonder no one has as yet entered it."

In closing, I should say that this work is by no means entirely my own. It is, in the first place, largely the result of the in-

terchange of thought through many and long conversations with Japanese ladies upon the topics herein treated. It has also been carefully revised and criticised; and many valuable additions have been made to it by Miss Umé Tsuda, teacher of English in the Peeresses' School in Tōkyō, and an old and intimate friend. Miss Tsuda is at present in this country, on a two years' leave, for purposes of further study. She has, amid her many duties as a student at Bryn Mawr College, given much time and thought to this work; and a large part of whatever value it may possess is due to her.

I would say, too, that in the verification of dates, names, and historical incidents, I have relied altogether upon Griffis's "Mikado's Empire" and Rein's "Japan," knowing that those two authors represent the best that has been done by foreigners in the field of Japanese history.

This work also owes much, not only to the suggestions and historical aids con-

tained in the "Mikado's Empire," but to Mr. Griffis himself, for his careful reading of my manuscript, and for his criticisms and suggestions. No greater encouragement can be given to an inexperienced author than the helpful criticism of one who has already distinguished himself in the same field of labor; and for just such friendly aid my warmest thanks are due to Mr. Griffis.

A. M. B.

HAMPTON, VA., *February*, 1891.

CONTENTS.



CHAPTER	PAGE
I. CHILDHOOD	1
II. EDUCATION	37
III. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE	57
IV. WIFE AND MOTHER	84
V. OLD AGE	119
VI. COURT LIFE	138
VII. LIFE IN CASTLE AND YASHIKI	169
VIII. SAMURAI WOMEN	196
IX. PEASANT WOMEN	228
X. LIFE IN THE CITIES	262
XI. DOMESTIC SERVICE	299
EPILOGUE	327