

developed countries. In a phrase, modern science made them so opulent and so powerful in less than two hundred years.

We may without impropriety mention that modern science has so far been consummated by Europeans through the pressing struggle for existence in Europe; and that its advancement was only incidental to them, and not through their superiority in race or religion. We may without unbecoming modesty maintain that Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism were all of them consummated by Asiatics through their philosophical trend of mind and nothing else; and that the conquest of the world by Asiatic religions was also incidental to Asiatics, and not through their exceptional superiority to other races and religions. Asiatic religions have at last conquered the whole world, whilst European science is gradually conquering the entire globe in different ways and in different spheres.

Intelligent men everywhere will in all probability agree that the march of events throughout the world will ultimately force Europeans and Asiatics to be in perfect harmony with each other, as the vast and enormous supply of European products, whether in Europe or in their colonies, to be produced by millions of European machines in the near future will, in the long run, have to find an unlimited and boundless demand, and such a demand Europeans at home and Europeans beyond the seas can only find in such countries as China, India, and Japan, where every acre of land is so densely populated, where annual imports are so colossal, and where populations are so rapidly increasing. It is also too obvious that Europeans will soon find themselves as the world's suppliers of provisions, whereas Asiatics will simultaneously discern themselves as the world's suppliers of labour, and its chief consumers.

The former are found to become the vendors of goods, and the latter are destined to become the purchasers of the same. The vendors and purchasers of goods may haggle about their prices, but they should bear in mind that either party is indispensable to their mutual advantages.

In conclusion, we roundly declare that the inhabitants of Asia should awake to the pressing needs of European science, and should fully recognize the vital importance of scientific inventions and discoveries, which were veritably the most salient causes of European opulence and predominance. Meanwhile we caution them to devote their fullest attention to the furtherance of modern science for the betterment of mankind everywhere.

### Financial Prospects for 1908.

In the course, says the Japan Chronicle, of a review of the financial situation of the year just passed Mr. Sonoda, President of the 15th Bank observes that with regard to the financial situation for 1908 it is impossible for him to attempt an accurate prognostication, but he would like to make public some of his views and to give expression to a few candid opinions.

The panic in New York, which had a world-wide effect, he says, appears to have greatly subsided, and it will not be long before the condition of the New York money market is restored to its normal state. At the same time the European money markets will revive, and the Japanese silk export trade with America, which has been suffering from intense depression of late, will gradually become brisk again, while Japanese export trade with European countries will resume its normal condition. On the other hand there must be a limit to the depreciation of silver, which cannot fall

below a certain price, otherwise there will be a fresh demand as a matter of course. The fall in silver being mainly attributed to the decrease in the demand for the metal on account of the famine in India, is it not likely that a demand will revive with better conditions? After famine it is usual to have rich harvests, and when once silver appreciates and exchange is on a sure basis, Japanese trade with China can hardly fail to become brisk and prosperous. Thus, with regard to the condition of the money market as the result of foreign trade, there seems nothing about which to be pessimistic, but rather there would seem to be a bright future before the country.

Coming to the question of taxation Mr. Sonoda says:—"It goes without saying that of the taxes levied out of sheer necessity during the war there are some which cannot be recommended. The Government, instead of attempting to decrease or obrogate such obnoxious taxes, intends to increase them, a step which is decidedly inadvisable. There may not be much harm in levying new taxes or increasing the taxation on luxuries, but to increase taxes on daily necessities, even in an indirect manner, and throw the burden on the general mass of the people is decidedly not a financial policy that can be approved. I am at a loss to understand why the Government is so much concerned about increasing the taxes. There certainly are many ways in which a curtailment of the general administrative expenditure could be carried out. Is not the present the very moment to urge upon the authorities the application of the principle of retrenchment which has been a by-word in the past? Doubtless, of course, the Government has many urgent matters on hand for the enhancement of national prestige and the development of national resources, but the tendency seems to be for preference to be given to unproductive

rather than productive enterprises, regardless, of the capabilities of the nation. In other words, is there not an inclination to adorn the exterior in order to maintain the prestige of a first-rate Power? As the result of inflation of national expenditure all kinds of commodities have risen in price. The rise in wages has directly affected our manufacturing industry, and also works to the detriment of our commerce. In short, it is a most regrettable fact that a check should have been placed upon the development of business enterprises and national prosperity on account of the country's financial policy not having been properly carried out."

With regard to international relations, except the unsettled immigration question with America, Mr. Sonoda remarks:—"We are on the most cordial terms with all other nationalities of the world. Both the Franco-Japanese and Russo-Japanese agreements are guarantees of peace. The whole nation must be prepared to utilise this period of peace for the national benefit, which must consist of nothing but concentrating every energy on business and industry. Both the Government and the people should ponder well upon the past and look towards the future, proceeding along the middle course and avoiding extremes."

### The Plum Blossom.

written by Yone Noguchi.

The niagari tune of a passionate *shamisen* burst; you will immediately hear the little silvery hauta song of a geisha:

"The nightingale steeped in the sweet spring rain,

The plum blossom odorous in the breeze of her wings,—

Oh, how dear they play, she and he,  
Even the little bird has her own mind

To fix her sleeping place.

I would be that nightingale,

Oh, would you that blossom be!"

No Japanese ever thinks of the plum blossom (let me call it so since there's no exact word for *ume*) sport from the nightingale. Mind you, this Japanese bird is not Keats' nightingale who sings of summer in full-throated ease; but it is a light-winged dryad of this particular plum tree, whose somewhat oblique eyes are set upon the blossoms of tragic white; you can make out any interesting mythology upon them. Dear eternal companions, plum blossoms and nightingale, the two divine spirits of the awakening Spring under the purple mists which begin to stir! Here I recall the sweet story of the daughter of the poet Ki no Tsurayuki of the tenth century; she was no mean *uta* poetess herself. It was the time of the Emperor Murakami when the plum trees before the edifice Seiryō Den of the Imperial ground died; the emperor sent off his men to seek after one proper plum tree in its place, and they found it—the tree of crimson blossoms—at the western city; they urged the owner of the tree to give it up for his Majesty, and he at last presented it accompanied with a bit of *uta* poem:

"Choku nareba, itomo kashikoshi,  
uguisu no

Yado wato towaba, ikani kotayen."

(August is the Imperial message, yet what will I say to the nightingale if she should ask, about her old home?)\*

The emperor read the poem, and wonder-

\* Such is the literal translation; Brinkley put it in his own English as follows:

"Claimed for our Sovereign's use,  
Blossoms I've loved so long,  
Can I in duty fail?  
But for the nightingale,  
Seeking her home of song,  
How shall I excuse?"

ed who might be the owner of the tree; he was mightily sorry. The owner was nobody else but the daughter or *Tsurayuki*, the poet.

The plum blossom, the inspiring harbinger of Spring, recalls to me another picture of association in Kajiwaru Genda Kagesuye, the bravest of the brave of the twelfth century when the swords and romances freely swung. He rushed alone his quiver glorified with the fresh branches of the plum blossom, into the battle array of the enemy; his bravery is historical. I am sure his *samurai* heart was that of the plum blossom, breaking out from the grey-coloured winter of cold, the undaunted soul itself. There is no other flower to contest its almost awe-inspiring nobility, highest grace with an almost unmistakable touch of sorrow to the Japanese mind. I cannot forget to mention Sugawara no Michizane, the counsellor by name of *udaijin* for the emperor Uda, whose favorite among flowers was the plum blossom; the *Kwampaku* Tokihira sent him into a sort of honorable exile to Dasarfu in the island of Kyushu, to free himself from the adverse influence of his wisdom; and he died there in A.D.903. There was a great reaction in regard to him after his death; he was soon canonized under the name of Tenjin, meaning Heavenly god, and is held sacred even today as the patron saint of nobility and of men of letters; in fact, the twenty-fifth day of each month is kept as a holiday in schools, sacred to Tenjin Sama and the twenty-fifth of June as an annual *matsuri*. His life is dramatised in the popular play of "Sugawara Tenjin Ki" and the shrines dedicated to his noblest soul are scattered all over the land; and the chief flowers which decorate the shrine grounds are nothing but the plum trees. It is from the old age that the Japanese found their

own ideal in the plum blossoms, and attempted to be as divine and pure as they. China also is not poor in the literature of the plum blossom; there are many famous Chinese poets who have written memorable poems; their regard toward the tree is exactly the same as ours. I might say that our minds were originally cultured by the Chinese literature; it is only natural that we should show much correspondence in heart and song. However, I speak of Ancient China. We have a million *uta*, *hokku*, and Chinese poems written by our poets; I am sure we could make a big anthology of only *ume* poems; it is the poets' flower, and there is no poet in Japan who has no poem upon it. "When the Spring was still cold, and the ice was was thick," I read in Mr. Kanzo Uchimura's prose farewell ode to the plum blossom, "I came to know that the Spring was really approaching by your blossoming. You are not Spring, but Spring's prophet. Spring is the cherry blossom, iris, wistaria, but as there are times for them to come, the Heavens sent you to let our Spring hope keep up.

"I do not say that I love you; rather I fear you; you are too dignified; you blossom alone on the branches unaccompanied by the green leaves; I do not call you beautiful; your odor is too sharp; your petals are too stiff; no one will sing the popular ditty underneath you; no one will be wild and dance with *saké* by your side; you are the prophet Jeremiah, you are John the Baptist. I feel as I stand before you as if I stood before the solemn master. But by your appearance I am to know that winter is passed already, and the delightful Spring is coming: you are the harbinger of Spring who goes denouncing the tyranny of winter. You break the power of winter, standing merely as an unsentient law, and let the queen of Spring

appear with gorgeous brocade on. Your face looks frowning, but your heart is the reservoir of tears; you are the flower easily to be misunderstood; while you are of the feminine gender, since you are a daughter of Spring, you dress like a man, and you are the manly man who was sent to break the ferocious fellow winter. I used to cry quite often seeing you under the wintry moon....."

The plum blossom is said to be one of "four gentlemen"; the others being the pine, bamboo, and the orchid. The blossom is emblematic of perseverance. There are hundreds of Japanese women who bear the name of *ume*, which to our minds carries the suggestion of virtue and sweetness. We are taught here to protect the fair name and leave it behind after death, as if you could smell the plum blossom even in darkness; I take the following from Piggott's *Garden of Japan*:

"Home friends change and change,

Years pass quickly by

Scent of our ancient plum tree,

Thou dost never die.

"Home friends are forgotten;

Plum tree blossoms fair,

Petals falling to the breeze,

Leave their fragrance there.

"Cettria's\* fancy too

Finds his cup of flowers

Seeks his peaceful hiding place

In the plum's sweet bowers.

"Though the snow-flakes hide

And thy blossoms kill,

He will sing, and I shall find

Fragrant incense still."

Even the late Dr. Keisuke Ito, the eminent botanist, cannot tell you when the plum tree made its appearance in Japan; there is no definite way to prove whether the word *ume* owes its derivation to China,

\* The nightingale is known in science as *cettria cantas*.

or is original Japanese. The Chinese call it the "head of the hundred flowers"; from the reason it will bloom first in the spring of the world. China has the flower from time immemorial as we in Japan; and it is quite probable it was imported here from China or Korea originally. However, we have it sung in poetry from the earliest age; *Kakinomoto no Hitomaro* who flourished at the end of the seventh century might be said to be the first *umé* poet. And it became a national flower properly glorified when the Emperor Kwammu (A. D. 782-806) planted it before the edifice Shishin Den of the palace ground of his new capital of Kyoto removed from Nara; and it sat on the floral throne, and emptied the universal adoration. It was to mean "plum blossom" when you said "flower" as you meant Hiyei San by "mountain" in those days; but it was forced to resign from the Imperial throne when the Emperor Murakami planted the cherry trees in its place in the third year of the Owa period; henceforward it has occupied the somewhat retired dais, gathering the choicest admiration from the poets and noble souls, but not from the common mass, while the cherry blossom took her throne. There is no question that the latter stands first for beauty; but the former has no competitor in respect of nobility and purity. It has the soul haunting odour a thousand years old; and its beauty is divinely kissed by some tragic sadness.

There are three hundred and fifty odd species of the plum, and sixty kinds among them are chiefly known; however, they are only white and crimson in colour, single and double in the fold petals. *Yatsubusa no Ume*, *Bungo Ume*, *Ko umé*, *Toko no Ume*, *Suisen Ume*, *Hayasaki Ume*, *Awoziki Ume* are important species; and beside them are *No Ume*, *Mochi Ume*, *Kobai*, *Hanagaron*

and others.

*Yatsubusa no Ume* is thus entitled from the reason that it bears eight fruits, having two or eight stamens; "Yatsubusa" means eight tassels. But only two or three of them grow to full ripeness and they are unfit for eating. The fruit of *Bungo Ume* is large, having two inches in diameter; it may be eaten uncooked; and it is fine pickled in salt or candied. It bears such a name because it grows in the Bungo province of the island Kyushu. *Ko Ume's* fruits are small as the tip of your thumb, and prized quite highly, being good for any way of eating; they grow in the Shinano and Kai provinces extensively. *Toko no Ume* is a late fruit, and it clings on the branch even when it is well ripened; therefore its name, "Toko" meaning eternal. *Suisen Ume* has six petals which are round or long; and *Hayasaki Ume* or *Toji Ume* as it called blooms already at the winter solstice; and also it is called *Haya Ume* meaning early plum. The *No Ume* is the most common kind among them.

Tsukigase of the Yamato province found a great admirer in Setsudo Saito, one of the great Chinese scholars in Japan, whose *Tsukigase Kiko* introduced the place to the public: the valley of the River Kizu stretching for upward of two or three miles will be covered with the blossom snows of pink and white. The old prince Rekko's wisdom in planting the plum trees in his Mito in 1837 is still as fragrant as the blossoms, living to this day in the shape of Tokiwa Park; in the season the excursion trains are despatched from Tokyo especially. The Tokyo people are quite fortunate with the plum orchards; you have Sugita, a snug village by the bluest water, not far from Yokohama, where a thousand plum trees display the beauty of a hundred years of age. The place

contains six special kinds of tree; and the different fancy names distinguish the different characters of flowers. (Japanese people are exceedingly clever in bestowing names upon flowers and trees.) And I am sure that you will count the *Gwario Bai* or Recumbent-dragon plum trees first; it is the most famous spot in the outskirts of Tokyo. There was, up the fifty odd years ago, a wonderful plum tree of great age and rarest shape, whose branches ploughed down the soil and formed newer roots in fourteen places, naturally covering an extensive area; one day the same old prince Rekko, the originator of the plum orchard of Mito, visited it, and gave the name of *Gwario Bai*, suggested from its curious shape; the Shogun of those days paid a special visit to the tree too, and made it "Goyoboku" meaning the tree of honorable service; and the fruits form this famous tree were yearly presented to him. However, it has been replaced by a number of less interesting trees, since the original *Gwario Bai* succumbed to decay; and they inherit the same name and also the same character of Recumbent Dragons, and invite a thousand admirers in the season, living up to the reputation their ancestor gained. And near the *Gwario Bai*, we have the Kinegawa orchard which has no mean fame, being the select resort of people of taste. There you see a hundred slips of paper tied upon suitable branches, where the *uta* or *hokku* poems were written; it is not a fiction at all that our poets of some old school will sit under the trees lost in fancy, and presently invite the souls of the blossoms and nightingales with their poems.

It is the most beautiful thing, and I hope that such a poetical habit will never die off. The plum blossom, the nightingale, and the poets make the world of beauty complete; their souls are one.

I think that the plum orchard at Shinji-

ku, another place on the outskirts of Tokyo, was appropriately named; Ginsekai means the Silver world. Here we have a poem which was translated into English thus:

"How shall I find my *umé* tree?"

The moon and the snow are white as she,

By the fragrance blown on the evening air,

Shalt thou find her there?"

There is no such delicious sight as that of the snow-clad landscape of the blossoms on a moon night, when the spring wind is not so sharp, and your fancy will sail on the silvery air.

Apart from the blossoms, the plum trees have a great value in a material way. The pickled plums made a mighty service in the last Russian-Japan war; and they have been used in the army since long years ago. And also they are good for dyeing purposes. It is said that the plum trees lining the River Kizu (Tsukigase) were planted originally in that aim; the fruits were dried and sent to the dyeing firms in Kyoto. They are fine, it is said, for the purification of silver and gold; and the Japanese jewellers and mechanics use them too. If you wash clothes in the water in which plum leaves have been wrung, they will never get mouldy in the rainy season. The trees themselves are extensively used for housebuilding.

There is no other country like Japan where we combine art with plant culture, especially is it so in the case of these dwarf trees. To make the dwarf plum trees bear many blossoms you have to bring them out in the hot summer air in the day time and give much water at evening; and you have to nurse them slowly in the greenhouse with great care, protecting them from the cold wind; then you will see them smiling to you perhaps, already on New Year's Day. The hearts of the

plum trees are a thousand years old, and yet young as the hope of Japan.

### BUSINESS NOTES.

According to the Custom returns issued by the Government, Japan's foreign trade for 1907 is:—

Japan's Foreign Trade for 1907. the total value of exports for the year is 420,019,726 *yen*, of imports 482,730,894, the latter thus exceeding exports by 62,711,168 *yen*. Compared with the preceding year, the exports show an increase of 1,735,163 *yen* and the imports an increase of 63,946,786.

The value of Government bonds to be issued in purchase of the Sanyo Railway has been decided upon at 76,639,200 *yen*. According to the estimate of the liquidators of the company, bonds representing 1,236,364 *yen* in face value are to be set aside for the redemption of the company's loan, amounting roughly to 1,020,000 *yen*, taking the value of bonds at the rate of 82.50 *yen* per 100 *yen* face value. The remaining 75,402,836 *yen* of bonds will be divided among the shareholders and will be equal to 104.40 *yen* per share. Taking the market value of 82.50 *yen* as calculated by the Government, shareholders will thus obtain 86.16 *yen* for each share of 50 *yen* paid up. (*Japan Chronicle*.)

In the course, says the *Japan Chronicle*, of a statement recently made to the financial committee of the Sinking Fund. Progressist Party Baron Sakatani, then Minister for Finance, stated that should the Sinking Fund be discontinued the collapse of the

foreign market for Japanese bonds would follow as a matter of course, in addition to which the share market in Japan would be seriously disturbed. Moreover, the redemption of the first issue of 5 per cent. War Bonds to the amount of 150,000,000 *yen* fell due next year, so that the Government had no intention whatever of suspending the Sinking Fund.

The foreign trade of Kobe for 1907 up to December the 20th, in comparison with the preceding year, is as follows:—

	1907.	1906.
Exports..... <i>yen</i>	103,719,039	<i>yen</i> 105,522,866
Imports.....	216,278,860	187,846,723
Excess of imports over exports.....	112,559,821	82,323,857

The value of the principal commodities exported and imported is as follows:—

EXPORTS.		
	1907.	1906.
Cotton yarn..... <i>yen</i>	15,318,443	<i>yen</i> 22,541,667
Rice .....	2,673,726	2,508,812
Copper .....	15,778,727	14,903,126
Tea .....	3,336,151	2,658,606
Matches .....	6,901,626	8,162,803
Matting.....	5,364,333	5,414,503
Straw and chip braid	4,303,083	3,713,043
Kibiso (filature silk).	666,867	650,731
Porcelain .....	4,961,685	5,370,860
Camphor .....	4,637,516	3,312,924
Seaweed .....	280,925	336,098
Cigarettes.....	527,944	806,101
IMPORTS.		
Raw cotton .....	<i>yen</i> 80,474,734	<i>yen</i> 62,947,877
Rice .....	9,353,729	8,581,955
Bar, rod and plate iron .....	11,922,219	7,662,119
Peas and beans .....	3,587,163	3,127,661
Oil cake.....	6,538,150	5,434,379
Sugar.....	756,337	1,282,62
Wool .....	2,010,934	2,105,483
Kerosene .....	4,112,824	3,772,130
Flour.....	1,926,104	2,365,527
Woollen cloth and serges .....	3,952,367	5,929,017
Grey shirting .....	3,610,078	3,806,358
Dried indigo .....	3,650,427	2,795,702

A bank with a capital of ten million *yen* has been newly established in Tokyo. The

**A New Bank.** bank is called the Toyo-kuni Ginko and has Mr. K. Hamaguchi, President of the Fuji Spinning Company, for its president. The head office is at Nihonbashi, Tokyo, and the branch offices are established at various places in the surrounding provinces of the capital.

A compromise has been made between the Nippon Yusen Kaisha and the North German Lloyd in relation to the competition on Swatow-Bangkok line of the two companies. The Japanese shipping company has given up its Bangkok service, for which a lucrative compensation has been obtained by it. The competition which had given rise to the feeling of uneasiness among foreign merchants in the East at the time when it had been commenced has now been abandoned to the satisfaction of both parties.

The Finance Department estimates the revenue from the kerosene-tax to be imposed from the next fiscal year (April 1st) at about 1,500,000 *yen* per annum.

**The Kerosene Tax.** We learn from a Tokyo dispatch to the *Yushin* that those engaged in the kerosene oil business in Niigata Prefecture, the chief oil-producing centre of Japan, are not particularly opposed to the proposed excise. However, they point out that the annual importation of crude American oil is estimated at about 1,080,000 koku, the import duty thereon being 60 sen per koku, while the duty on refined oil is 96 sen for 2 *to*. From one koku of crude oil, six *to* of illuminating or refined oil can be obtained. If a duty equivalent to the rate on refined oil is

imposed on crude oil, the rate would be 2.88 *yen* on six *to*, and the oil men maintain that a duty of 2.88 *yen* should be imposed on crude oil imported from America and Russia. They further maintain that should American crude oil be admitted at the low duty of 60 sen per koku as at present, the Standard Oil Company and Messrs. Samuel Samuel & Co. would be likely to import crude oil in large quantities, and the petroleum industry, which is now in process of development, will be seriously affected, if not permanently crippled. Therefore it is believed that the Government will take measures to check the importation of crude oil, and protect the petroleum industry in Japan. (*Japan Chronicle*.)

Rumours are in circulation regarding troubles among the staff of the new Oriental Glass Manufacturing Company, which is now constructing a large factory at Sagisu, in Osaka. This is one of the schemes of the syndicate formed by Mr. Loonen. An Osaka paper states that a proposal is now under consideration to sell the factory now in course of construction and other property to the Asahi Glass Company, which is also erecting a factory at Amagasaki, the principal shareholders being Mr. Shimada, a director of the Shimada Glass Company of Osaka, and Baron Iwasaki, of Tokyo. (*Japan Chronicle*.)

It is stated that the Government has decided to give a subsidy of 300,000 *yen* annually to the Far Eastern Colonization Society, of which Marquis Katsura is the chief promoter. The subsidy will be for a period of 15 years and a bill in that sense will be introduced in the Diet.