There is one small club whose members meet to practise their national "Jiujutsu," a scientific method of wrestling.

The Japanese in New York.

BY ONOTO WATANNA.

THE Japanese of New York make a small but energetic and ambitious colony, approximating a thousand, of which only thirty are women.

There is not a great diversity in the employments they follow. Apart from the merchants and importers, men in the consular service, a few writers and three or four artists, the average Japanese in Manhattan is either a clerk or domestic servant. Of course there are also a number of students attending the colleges here, but even among these one may find youths employed as above, using their meagre earnings to defray their college expenses. Besides these there are a number of men of leisure who have literally made New York their home. I believe there is only one lecturer in the colony, and it might also include a transient group of jugglers, who like most vaudeville players, make New York their headquarters.

I make no defense of the ambition that causes one to cross thousands and thousands of miles of land and water to come to a strange and alien country for the pitiful employment of domestic service in a foreigner's household. There are not many Americans who would do this. Still, there is something admirable in the spirit behind it, which, after all, is superior to the pride scorning such employment. Many of the Japanese who come to New York are bitterly poor. It is an old delusion that the average student here is sent by the generous Japanese government. On the contrary, most of the young Japanese men in New York have come on their own account to satisfy their native curiosity and thirst for more knowledge of the great and fascinating West. How many of

these youths arrive utterly penniless and friendless! But having reached the land of desire, they must at once "study the country." For this time and money are required: the former they have: the latter they must obtain at once in order to exist. And so they go to work—the easiest work to obtain. They make excellent butlers, valets and cooks. They are both clean and dignified—excellent traits in a servant.

It is told of the Marquis Ito that when a youth he wandered about the streets of London, penniless, ragged and hungry, a starving alien in a strange land. No employment was too lowly for that one whose eager and ambitious mind was in after years to point out to the civilized world a new sun of astonishing brightness arisen in the East.

That the Japanese merchants and men of means appreciate the real spirit which has brought their poorer countrymen to New York is shown by the really beautiful beneficence of these men. Many of them are private benefactors on a most unexpected scale, as is shown in the case of three tea merchants who have imported to this country a number of Japanese youths and are personally paying for their education and living. Besides this, the number of their proteges among the clerks and artizans is astonishing.

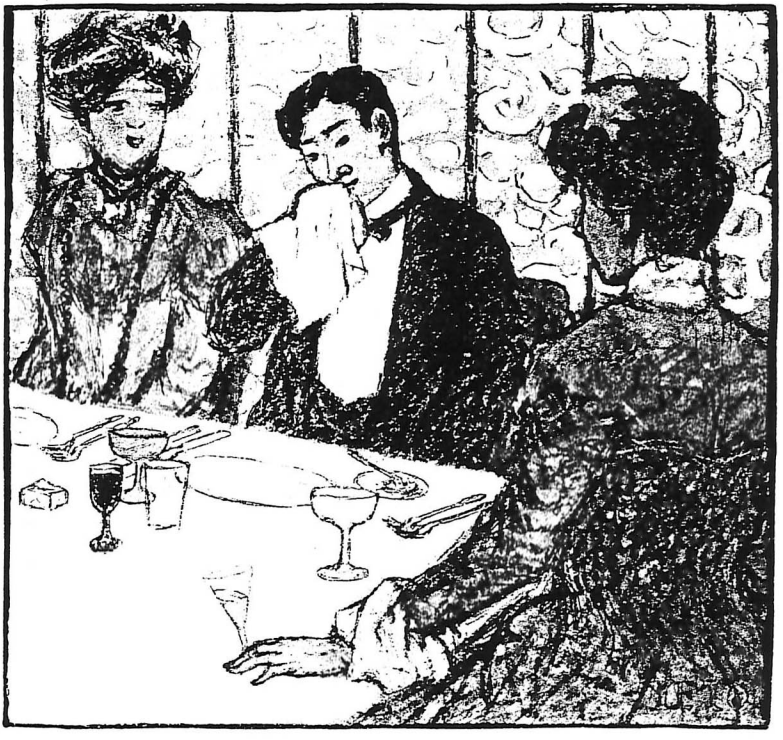
The Japanese who have the oddest experiences in New York are those who endeavor to become very American.

But it is not all striving, aspiring and working among the Japanese of New York. On the contrary they are quite a gay and happy little colony. They have their clubs, their societies, small social circles and gatherings. There is one small club whose members meet to practise their national Jiujutsu, a scientific method of wrestling and boxing quite unsurpassed in the West. There is much mystery, too, about this Jiujutsu, and the members are under a rigid oath to reveal none of the various secrets of this ancient cult.

The Hinode or Rising Sun Club is the foremost and most exclusive social organization in the city. It was founded in 1896. Its members are for the most part men of leisure, merchants, importers, students, writers and artists. The pleasures and sports enjoyed by this organization are strikingly American—yachting, excursions, tennis, golf, bowling, billiards, and even card-playing. The Club prides itself upon its Americanism, though in reality beneath its western surface it is essentially Japanese. The influence of Dai Nippon is upon every individual member. This may account for the fact that not one of its members has become a naturalized citizen of this country. The heart and nature beneath the American clothes are still Japanese.

A number of the Japanese have married American women and the latter affiliate quite freely with the Japanese colony. There are very few half-castes in New York, and most of these are children. They are regarded here with far more toleration and even cordiality by the Japanese than they would be in Japan. This is doubtless because of the fact that after all a good many of the Japanese here are in favor of mixed marriages and cherish the desire to marry a western woman; so that their own offspring may be of that same mixture of blood formerly despised in far away Japan, that is, the Eurasian.

Lafcadio Hearn holds that the Japanese have the greatest patriotism. It



He declared to his hostess that that food was "most hot stuff."

is true, to the point of fanaticism. Right here in New York that almost religious love for the fatherland is constantly shown. Whenever any matter of national import to Japan is brought to a crisis then the little band of Japanese in New York is simply aflutter with excitement. The colony is well informed concerning all the political movements of its distant home, and every bit of triumph, diplomatic or otherwise, attained by their country is exultantly celebrated by the exiles in Manhattan. When the several nations of the world were battering the walls of Pekin, and little Japan plunged in bantam-like for her share of martial honor, few knew that the Japanese in New York celebrated the occasion by a banquet given at Sherry's. With tears in their eyes they hoarsely sang the national anthem and with equal fervor the Star-Spangled Banner.

The Japanese of New York are a somewhat serious and even solemn appearing little band. There is not a strong enough sense of humor among them to appreciate some of the very humorous experiences they meet in New York. Consequently these very experiences often take on, to them, the aspect of tragedy.

For instance, there is a small but handsome Japanese gentleman in New York who is a sentimentalist by nature. As he is rich, cultured and very entertaining, he is a great favorite

within a circle of Americans. He is always in love with some impossible woman and his *amours* are the joke of his countrymen and the despair of his own heart. Unfortunately, he has a wife and a number of babies at home in Japan. A New York lawyer has advised him that he cannot also legally marry an American woman. Nothing would induce him to divorce his Japanese wife, of whom he is very fond, but he simply cannot resist the charms of the women of this country. He is rich enough to retire to his Japan, but he lingers on here. Among his American acquaintances he is thought to be a bachelor.

The Japanese who have the oddest experiences in New York are those who endeavor to become very American, and consequently seek to make New York friends. Of a dignified, sensitive temperament, the Japanese is constantly having his *amour propre* pierced in consequence. Often, to his intense indignation, he finds himself, instead of the respected guest, the object of amusement and entertainment to his American hosts. This is often involuntary on the part of the latter, and in justice to them there are only a few after all who invite Mr. Japan "because he is sure to amuse everybody else there." The absurd mistakes made by the hapless Japanese new to American ways are usually the cause of the latter's mirth. Take, for instance, the case of a young Japanese gentleman of high birth and very elegant manners. He was entertained by a charming New York woman who really was flattered and pleased to have him as her guest and had invited a number of distinguished friends to meet him. All went well until dinner time. Then the previously flattered Japanese suddenly found himself the object of the most unexpected mirth, stifled and suppressed when possible, but undeniably there. To laugh at a Japanese gentleman of dignity is a deadly affront and insult, and the paleness of the guest was not wholly due to the barbarous food he had swallowed. True to the tradition of his own race, this gentleman, out of compliment to his hostess, had eaten all placed before him. Food in America is not always served in the dainty small courses with which the Japanese are familiar, and so the action of this guest was quite heroic. He ate everything before him and everything handed to him, even to a full plate of hot and spicy chow-chow, from which he was only expected to help himself to a portion. Having swallowed this chow-chow and vainly endeavoring to stifle a choking cough, he declared to his hostess that that food was "most hot stuff," a remark which sent the table into convulsions.

One of the transient group of jugglers who make New York their headquarters.

New York has among its Japanese colony a fair number of clever artists, humorists and writers. The latter contribute to a little magazine published here called "Japan and America." It is published and written in the English language, but its editors and general staff and contributors are all Japanese.

The colony has, too, one poet—one lone poet. His muse finds its inspiration in the English tongue—and sometimes it distorts the language grotesquely. But the poet is a poet for a' that. He says he would rather be a poet by nature than write poetry. So he can humor his fancies to his heart's content. And his fancies are eccentric. When he likes a person he is apt to send him poems over the telegraph wires, and when he dislikes one he is

sure to tell one so. He has big brown eyes, very sad and mysterious in expression. His hair is long and straight and silky, and he "looks the part."

Then there is a modern Japanese artist in the colony. By that I mean one who has deliberately abandoned all the ideals of his countrymen in regard to art. Then he studied art in America. He is one of those Japanese who are complimented if you take them by mistake for Frenchmen.

While picking out the various characters of distinction in the colony, I must not forget a Japanese-German. He is the son of a German nobleman by a Japanese wife. There is no question of his genius—and indeed he is a genius in more ways than one, the very reason, perhaps, of his failure to win the highest laurels. He writes exquisitely, both in German and in English. His little stories are prose poems. No words could be more happily used than he uses them in his writing. He is also a clever artist, a book and art critic, and besides all this, a perfume entertainer. In short, he has invented a novel device of entertainment; one, however, which only the truly æsthetic could enjoy and appreciate. His invention is a device for diffusing perfumes of various sorts throughout a concert hall. He lectures on a trip to Japan. His audience is taken by him verbally to the various countries at which they wish to stop before reaching Japan. Starting from America with the hall all odorous of American beauties, he changes the perfume at each stopping place until Japan, with her trees of cherry, is reached and smelled. Sad to relate, the only occasion upon which this versatile man gave his lecture, a stupid manager arranged his "attraction" for a beer garden. It is needless to say that the noses of the placidly smoking and drinking patrons were not sufficiently æsthetic to smell the point of the lecture.

Every once in a while one drifts across some little waif of Japan in this city, who seems somehow cut off and separated, not only from the Americans, but his own people. I ran after a Japanese lad I saw turned away from an elevator in a building, bearing that edifying motto—"No canvassers, dogs or beggars admitted." The boy had a basket of lily bulbs. He was thin and weary looking, his face white and pinched, and his hands were blue with cold. I was fabulously rich that day (having disposed of a story to a magazine), and I "went shares" with the lily boy.

The boy had a basket of lily bulbs.

In Coney Island, once I came across a real Jap-Yankee. He was crying his wares in a voice which drowned out a Hebrew rival's, and his hand swung back and forth a mechanical American balloon, blown into the form of a pig. Here was enterprise for you!