洛水之調
AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY
OF
UKIYO-YE
Illustrated with Twenty Reproductions
in
JAPANESE WOOD ENGRAVINGS
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AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY

OF

UKIYŒ-YŒ.

JAPANESE Art is a theme that gives perpetual delight to those who love beauty for its own sake, and opens endless fields of investigation to those also whose interest lies more in knowing and classifying than in feeling. For forty years it has more and more claimed the attention of the Western world; and yet, to-day, the ever increasing enthusiasm for it seems to be due to its almost infinite freshness. Some few critics have denounced it as the subject of a passing craze; but the fact that, meanwhile, its influence has revolutionized our book-illustration, our designs for industry, our theories of pictorial construction, proves that it has come to stay. Like the theory of evolution, it has made itself a necessary part of the world's consciousness.

This undimmed freshness of Japanese art springs partly from the fact that it is the only great body of the world's art that has not been thoroughly explored. Greek art, and Gothic and Renaissance, and Moorish we know; and it is chiefly the antiquarian who profits by any late discovery concerning them that materially adds to the prolonged researches of centuries. Here, however, an almost infinite extent of treasure lies open to our inquisitive minds and plundering hands. It is as if we had found the key to an Aladdin's storeroom; or, in a dream, were, picking up those handfuls of nuggets that proclaim an exhaustless vein beneath. Every new specimen is a revelation. For centuries there has been relatively little repetition in this art. Even the main phases into which it can be classified are almost endless. Those who, like the author, have lived in Japan off and on for twenty years, and have been specialist collectors of Ukiyo-ye, truly aver that each treasure they have seen is unique. Few of us have
been without cause to regret some opportunity lost years before when we let an important specimen go by, the like of which we have since searched for in vain. Even to-day, after two generations of "scouring," when the markets produce a fine piece, it is in some respects unlike all which have come before. For this reason all books yet written about Japanese art have merely scratched the surface. Nine people out of ten think of this art only as so many fan and tea-pot sketches. Collectors themselves require some time to pass out of the amateurish stage where everything is regarded as a "curio," to the rational stage where each work of art is regarded as an index to the Japanese soul that created it. That these people have, for a thousand years, been pouring out the utmost treasures of their hearts into forms of external beauty, and that the results are as endlessly various as the human spirit itself, are facts that dawn upon us slowly. It is probable that many who pass in Europe for connoisseurs have not seen one fiftieth of the leading types; and so there still lies waiting for the world joy after joy through many years of fresh surprises.

But, more potent, perhaps, than the delight of seeing, is for the acquisitive West the novelty of possessing. The great gems of European art were spoken for by monarchs centuries ago, and are visible to-day only in remote museums, or in jealously guarded collections of the very wealthy. No one can hope to acquire any large number of Greek marbles, or genuine Bellinis, or even Durer engravings, now or hereafter. The price has lifted them beyond the reach of most true lovers; and the scarcity of typical specimens forces the classifier to travel painfully over the world mousing among alien accumulations. To be sure, much is done for us in reproductions, photographs and casts; but these cannot take the place of originals even in those cases where the element of colour is unimportant. It is in Japanese art alone that in recent times, and still to-day, any worthy collection of leading types can be acquired by the average art-lover, or studied in his private gallery by the enthusiastic scholar. Collections of thousands of these masterpieces have become fairly common all over the world. And, though the itinerant dealer may have forsaken the field discouraged, every sagacious traveller in Japan knows that still it is possible to unearth splendid specimens by a little careful research, the very excitement of which adds joy to the success.

Now, of all the many lines of research and collection in Japanese art, none, perhaps, answers so perfectly to the pleasing conditions above enumerated as that branch of illustrative art called "Ukiyo-ye." This is by no
making the oldest, the most profound, the most spiritual, or even the most decorative of the Japanese arts. In the classified total of achievements it plays almost an inconspicuous part. As I have placed it in my "Holki catalogue," published by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts;—"The Ukiyo-e is only one of eight leading schools whose contemporary work constitutes but the Fifth Period of Japanese Pictorial Art." It is thus only a fraction of a fraction of a fraction. And yet it is probably that branch by which Japanese art is most widely known and appreciated in the West today. For one enthusiast who has seen a genuine Hokusai there are a hundred who have studied with delight a hundred works of Hokusai. It is the accessible number of the specimens of Ukiyo-e that keeps the interest as high. The student goes on and on piling up a thousand facts of observation, the pure appre- ciator finds each newly acquired treasure a revelation. We cannot know Saisho or Motomura thoroughly, because few of us have had the privilege of comparing a paity dozen of their works. To understand any artist we must be able to trace something of the course of his inspiration; and this indeed implies a fairly wide basis of comparison. But this is just what is obtainable in the prints of Ohama, Harunobu, and Kiyonaga. We can follow step by step the keenness of their rivalry, the freshness of their discoveries, the joy of their triumphs. And so the collector, it is this very lavish multiplicity of their designs that brings relative cheapness. One seldom finds duplicated the design, even of a print. The edition has become dispersed and lost, and yet so countless were these editions that one of each can become the unit of a large collection. And it is not to the multiplicity and cheapness of the prints alone that the wide knowledge and popularity of the Ukiyo-e are due. Even the paintings of Ukiyo-e belonging to such remote centuries that large numbers of them are still obtainable; and a careful collection in Japan to-day can readily pick up a whole cabinet-full of original Hokusai.

Yet, after forty years of collection, and no small familiarity to the West with individual specimens of Ukiyo-e art, it cannot be said that this subject as a whole has been presented by any author. Eastern or Western, investigation is still on foot; and while several illuminated publications, English, French, Italian, and German, have dealt more or less adequately with the Japanese art of printing, the necessary materials for an exhaustive treatment exist, if at all, mostly in "cabinet catalogues" of collections and exhibitions. Besides, the true History of Ukiyo-e, although including prints as one of its most fascinating divisions, is not a history of the technical art of printing, but primarily an aesthetic history of a peculiar kind.
of design. This design may have been sold and used under a dozen utilitarian forms—prints, paintings, or book-illustration; but the forms are rather stages in the evolution of the subject, than the subject itself. It is, thus, my purpose is this brief essay to call attention to the proportions of Ukiyo-ye as a whole; not laying much stress on accidental details, but trying to outline the relative importance and the interrelations of all its main divisions. And, moreover, while it is true, as I have said, that a large collection of Ukiyo-ye originals is a thing still possible to form, a stage in Western collecting has been reached at which a series of reproductions of the really important types is becoming greatly desired. It is a long time yet, we hope, before the prints of Harunobu and others will be accessible only, as are now the early German engravings, in the reproduced illustrations of descriptive monographs; but surely, if postage stamps may enjoy the honour of systematic classification in printed copies, the bewildering field of Japanese design no less deserves a visible guide and standard. I regret to say that it is far from the scope of this little book to claim for itself so honourable an ambition. Whatever the author may hope to do in the future along this line, here he must apologize for the most modest of beginnings. Even so, he ventures to hope that twenty typical illustrations, carefully selected, arranged, and reproduced, may prove of some use to those who wish to study the subject, and may also afford a share of pure delight, to many who have never seen the originals.

Those who have heretofore classified Japanese art, have done so chiefly along the line of materials. And, for the purposes of the specialist collector, it may often be convenient to take up separate monographs on Porcelain, Lacquer, Metal-work, Wood-sculpture, Painting, Ivory carving, Textiles, and Prints. Yet if one wishes to come to the real heart of the history, and study as one what in fact existed as one, a true basis of classification must be chronological. Design and its industrial applications are not in reality so divorced. Art is more of the spirit than of the hand; and it is the aesthetic spirit of an age that dominates the whole mass of its work. For example, what is common to Greek vases and Greek marbles, that is, what is essentially Greek, points to a far more important unity than what on the one hand is common to Greek vases and Italian majolica, and on the other to Greek marbles and Gothic sculpture. So well is this principle beginning to be understood,—that the aesthetic species of the art of an age or a race stands apart as a whole,—that many of our art museums are planning to-day a complete regrouping of specimens according to the common
atmosphere of their environment. A Greek room, for instance, would contain appropriate paintings, statues, bronzes, ceramic utensils, and mosaics; a Damascus room would exhibit the totality of its Turkish belongings, such as may be seen in the South Kensington Museum in London. He who wishes to grasp the truth must, at least, think in this way, even down to the separate stages of a national art, if that art has had the fortune to last for any length of time. Thus the total of Athenian art in the fifth century B.C., must be marked off from the total of Alexandrian art. It is always the chronological clue that determines expert criticism. And so it is that, while Japanese art as a whole may be distinguished from Italian art, yet, within itself, an essential subdivision follows the radical changes of design which the changing environment of a long history necessarily produced.

Japanese art as a whole may be classified into five great historical divisions, in each of which the aesthetic principle is unique. Within each lies the entire round of all artistic industries belonging to that particular period. Thus the pottery of ancient Nara must be studied side by side with the sculpture of that age, and not in connection with the fineness of the artist Kogan or the porcelain of Nii sei. The true subject of the History of Art is the Spirit of Design. And, while it would greatly please me to dilate here on the spirit of design of all the five Japanese periods, yet the limits of this essay deny me the privilege. So I will content myself with quoting the concluding paragraph of my second article, “An Outline of Japanese Art,” published in the Century Magazine for June 1898: “In recapitulating these five periods of Japanese art, from 600 to 1870, the reader should be reminded that the first step toward a true knowledge of such a complex whole, is a rationally chronological guard of division between the broadest and most general qualities of their several aesthetic styles. This I have tried to furnish. To repeat: in the first period, Confucian-derived religious sculpture had stood, at Nara, for patriarchism and faith; in the second, Chinese-derived religious painting had stood, at Kioto, for oligarchy and power; in the third, Japanese historical painting had stood, at Kamakura and Kioto, for war and individuality; in the fourth, Chinese-derived landscape painting had stood, at Kioto, for the idealization of nature; and in the fifth, Japanese realistic and genre painting had stood, at Yedo and Kioto, for the education into national self-consciousness of the common people. Should a sixth period fortunately supervene, may we not trust that it will stand for a demonstration of the value of Asiatic ideals as a factor in the whole world’s coming type of civilization?”

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This must serve as the meager indication. In the interests of Ukiyo-ye I must confine my remarks hereafter to the fifth period, which comprises, roughly speaking, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the first half of the nineteenth. It is thus practically coextensive with the rule of the Tokugawa dynasty of Shoguns at their new capital, Yedo.

Now the fact is that this fifth period has less of aesthetic unity than any of the four which preceded it; and for this reason the characterization given in the above quotation is misleading by its simplicity. The Tokugawa age was one broken up by many new, half-conscious, and diverging ideals, and there were changing what had before been a relatively simple society into one of extraordinary complexity. And since each of the several local movements had a different spirit, so was it inevitable that each should find expression in a different conception of the whole round of its industrial arts. The Tokugawa period therefore consists of eight parallel divisions, each of which must be studied by itself; in much the same way, though in a less marked degree, that each of the preceding four periods must be studied by itself. For example, Kenzan's pottery and Koyeoto's lacquer and Setatsu's painting belong primarily to the school of Korin's design. As I have enumerated these eight partial movements in my Hokusai Catalogue above mentioned, they are: 1. the "ultra-impressionism" of Korin. 2. the Neo-Chinese school of Napping which radiated from Nagasaki. 3. the scholastic Chinese school, "Busnings," which suddenly spread over Japan in the eighteenth century. 4. the "Shijo" school of realism founded at Kyoto by the painter Oko. 5. Ukiyo-ye, the art of the populace of Yedo, 6. the aristocratic school of the "Kano" in the feudal courts of the daimios, 7. the "Tosa-Sumiyoshi" school which expressed a returning interest in the affairs and history of the Mikado's Imperial court, and 8. a religious art which accompanied a late renaissance of Buddhism. Besides these were several minor schools, and others formed by an eclectic combination of two or more of these. But the chief thing to remark of them all is, that they were not only schools of painting, but schools of a design that permeated all the arts and manufactures which came under their local influence.

Now, since the schools of the fifth period are so many, it will be convenient for us first to divide them into two groups, according to the rank of Tokugawa society which their influence penetrated. On the one side, that is, above, stood the mass of the "gentlemen," the educated classes of more or less noble descent, daimios, feudal knights, scholars, and the religious orders. Of these there may have been some three million, a notable governing caste which inhabited
chiefly the large towns. On the other side, that is, below, stood the mass of the commoners, artisans, farmers, merchants, servants, and fishermen; and these may have numbered fifteen or twenty millions scattered over the whole country, but concentrating their life and habits chiefly in the great cities. In earlier centuries the second, the plebeian caste, had never had an art of its own. While it had supplied the aristocrats and soldiers with the material basis of their luxury and power, it had enjoyed little of secular education, and only the more exoteric rudiments of spiritual training. What ideals and diversions it had, came to it filtering from the strata above; and while a charming primitive sweetness prevailed in its village life, it had never presumed to erect itself into a separate force, or an important national factor. But this is just what it did in the fifth period, the age of the Tokugawa; and that is why I spoke of the elevation of the masses as the most striking feature of contemporary art. Of the eight schools enumerated above, the "Shijo" and the "Ukiyo-ye" belong to the plebeians; the remaining six had to do, for the most part, with the aristocrats. It was mainly in the populous and busy cities that the commoners were able to concentrate enough original life to evolve a peculiar culture of their own, raise independent standards, and create a new art. These upstart accomplishments soon gained many sympathizers in the country districts, especially among the wealthy farmers, but the centres of origin remained practically confined to the great capital city of Yedo in the East, and the ancient twin cities of Osaka and Kioto in the West. Of the latter Osaka, though a commercial centre, drew its inspiration chiefly from the quiet ideals of citizens who dwelt near the Mikado's Kioto palace; and thus it fell out that only two great plebeian schools succeeded in maturing; one being the "Shijo," the new art of the Kioto populace, the other the "Ukiyo-ye," or the now popular art of the seething masses of Yedo.

This definition of Ukiyo-ye as the peculiar art of the populace of Yedo, gives it a special interest for foreign critics and scholars. Though it took its obscure rise during the seventeenth century at Kioto, its conscious establishment as a flourishing school dates from its permanent transplanting to Yedo a little more than two hundred years ago. It was then, about the great period Genroku (1688-1703), that latent germs of the social duality really involved in the Tokugawa constitution began to make themselves felt. Iyiyasu, the first and greatest of the Tokugawa Shoguns, had secured peace among the warring daimio courts by restricting the discipline of knighthly life, and by requiring a half-yearly residence of all the local lords in their Yedo palaces and yashikis. But probably he had not foreseen that in
the vast city that would be created to support this half-million of resident aristocrats, and in the growing wealth of the country now concentrating at Yedo, a new burgher society and life would arise, as in the free cities of Europe, to dispute with the consolidated feudal system, at first for existence, next for culture, and last for the control of government itself. It is not necessary here to speak at length of this growing separation, rivalry, and antagonism between the two carefully defined castes of Yedo society. The endless stories of romance that sprang from such abnormal conditions will be the fascinating themes of a yet unwritten history of Tokugawa days. The sort of life led by the upper classes is well presented by Mr. Knapp in the earlier chapters of his “Modern and Feudal Japan.” A glimpse into the intense romance and pathos of the humbler world may be found in the exquisite essays and stories of Mr. Hearn. It is enough for me here to point out that the utmost historical interest lies in that mass of “documents” which we group together as “Ukiyo-ye”; for, being the art of so industrial a population, it embodied their life, their joys, their fashions and their beliefs with an accuracy that has made it a minute encyclopedia of vanished phases which no recorded words could clearly have expressed. Think of our rapture, had a preserved art of Greek illustration freshened for the eye the words of Pausanias into vivid pictures of daily Hellenic life. As it is, we have precious hints in vase-paintings, mortuary sculpture, and clay figurines; but never, except in European illustrated literature of the nineteenth century, the era of photography, has the world preserved such a faithful picture of an age’s popular life, executed by and for the people themselves, as this extraordinary record of Ukiyo-ye. It is only within a year or two that the Japanese also have been coming to perceive this fact. The prejudice against Ukiyo-ye, as a low and degraded form of art, was firmly established in the mind of the Yedo samurai, as a part of the very discipline that preserved the exclusion of his caste; and that prejudice has coloured until now the estimate of the educated inhabitants of Tokio, who, for the most part, are the descendants of those warlike feudatories. And the prejudice was not without foundation, as we shall shortly see; for the new art of the people, cut off from the guidance of its superiors and turned inward upon itself, naturally lost all relation to the higher imaginative ideals of earlier ages, and was forced to steep itself in those popular pleasures which the samurai were trained to avoid. Thus its subjects were drawn chiefly from the recently established theatre, with what almost amounted to adoration of the master-actors, and from the beauty, costumes, and habits of that butterfly world on the outskirts of the capital.
the ladies of the pleasure-town of "Yoshiwara," who rivalled as a recognized social institution the hetaire of ancient Athens. But surely the sight of a painted belle of the last century can have little power to demoralize the youth of Meiji; and the time is rapidly approaching when the Japanese crave for these relics, as both beautiful and enlightening documents, will rival the foreign demand of New York and Paris. For the people who through such a close artificial atmosphere filled themselves into knowledge, have become the cosmopolitan constitutionalists of to-day.

I should not stop here to say much of the forms of this peculiar culture, did they not so vitally concern and explain many of the forms of Ukiyo-ye itself. As I have enumerated the more important of them in my Century article (June 1898); they were, (1) book-printing, (2) book-illustration, (3) a recasting of the national history, (4) the revival of interest in the Shinto faith, (5) the rise of a prolific school of fiction, (6) the theatre proper, differentiated from the ancient No opera, (7) a pursuit of science and a knowledge of foreign culture, partly through the influence of the Dutch at Nagasaki, and (8) an ever-increasing desire to travel to all the interesting parts of the empire. In these ways the popular life of the eighteenth century became the root and foundation of modern Japanese progress; and the preparation was a most salutary one, amounting as it did to an expansion of the racial consciousness to the full limits of its area, the taking an inventory, as it were, of all national resources before plunging into the unknown issues of international competition. It would have been a stupid and forgetful Japan we should have met had it been limited to the narrow love and tastes of the samurai.

Of the forms enumerated above all are peaceful, popular, and educational. Book-printing, it is true, had existed before this day; but never in cheap and large editions capable of circulation among a populace well literate, and mostly with subjects confined to the earlier Chinese and Japanese ideals. It now became as potent a revolution as the expansion of printing in Europe. The popular histories and romances were its immediate outcome. Critics, scientific publications, encyclopaedias, and hand-books of travel followed more slowly. The theatre was primarily an illustration in living action of the historical romance; but soon the works of talented playwrights became published and read as an important branch of literature. Such a world of faculties just freed demands something more vivid than thought, more active than the impressionism of No, something pictorial, moving before the eye, a sensitive mirror of its own changeable moods. Besides the theatre, therefore, the second item, pictorial illustrations for books, enormously
enhanced the value of the seven other branches. This new form of the art of printing made use of engraved wooden blocks much like those used for the characters of the text, affording outline impressions in the same tone of ink. Its true Western analogue is the early block printing of Germany. What life it gave to the romances may be seen in the illustrative wood-cuts of Hokusai. The primitive Yedo theatre we know to-day chiefly through these printed representations of famous characters in costume. In the case of encyclopaedias, scientific collections and books of travel, the picture became the very core of the publication, the vividness of a design requiring but a thin accompaniment of verbal comment. Lastly the movement expanded into a rich series of pattern-books for all the leading art-industries, and here text was practically discarded, while artistic appreciation and a faculty for design grew into the heritage of a whole people. Thus this most popular and educating of all the pictorial arts, book-illustration, became an important root of Ukiyo-ye.

The other important aesthetic root was the art of painting itself. Here the element of colour was specially supplied. Painting had been one of the leading arts of the four preceding periods, and indeed, in the third, the age of Japanese historical painting from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, had often concerned itself with the representation of popular life, though at the hands, and in the interest of the ruling classes. The subjects were popular if the art was not; but at that time no invention of printing had arisen to disperse widely and to preserve the designs of this early historical school. The national art of the fifth period was in some sense a revival of that of the third after a long interval of Chinese idealism; but the jealousy of the Shogunate to repress the samurai's restless love for fact forced the revival into the lower channels of popular interest. The standards of the ancient pictorial art followed the same fortune of repression, and the intensity of colour in the early Ukiyo-ye is in marked contrast to the monochrome sketches of the court artists. Thus in time the popular demand for cheaper and cheaper pictorial representation brought about the issue of limited editions of rapid Ukiyo-ye sketches daubed with bright colours. These so called Otsu-ye, executed in a moment with a few strokes of the charged brush, were circulated among the lowest classes in place of more elaborate paintings. Here indeed was an added opportunity for the new art of block-printing, heretofore confined to small book illustrations. Why not print a hundred or a thousand copies of some popular design on large paper sheets, instead of painfully working out a whole edition with
the uncertain brush? Thus the block printing of pictorial designs on single sheets is really a coalescing of the two roots of Ukiyo-ye, coloured paintings, and monochrome book-illustrations. From the first the sheets were three or four times the size of a book-page; and could readily be mounted and hung up in private houses or inns in the place of true paintings. From the first, too, though printed in black outline like the book-illustrations, they were generally touched up with small dabs of colour from a brush, quite in the style of the discarded Otsu-ye. Later this system of hand-colouring became very much more elaborately developed, until the harmony of tints in a printed Okumura Masanobu actually came to vie with a full painting. It was now high time for a new invention that should make colour itself cheaper; and the result was, that, about 1742, additional blocks were cut for the purpose of filling up the interspaces of lines with flat printed tints. Here was an aesthetic step far beyond the compass of the most elaborate Otsu-ye; a step which indeed transcended by simplicity of design and sureness of execution the work of the somewhat wayward brush of even the greatest painters. At any rate the art of colour-effects in prints must be radically different from the art of the best colour effects in painting; and from this time onward the large single sheet colour-prints grow into a third parallel line for the development of Ukiyo-ye. For some years after this change book-illustration remained unaffected by it, being still confined to ink-prints in outline; but eventually colour-printing found its way into books also, not without some detriment, perhaps, in spite of its beauty, to the art of book-making. In any case we can now see that the work of Ukiyo-ye was confined within three more or less separate courses;—painting proper, the single sheet pictorial print, and book illustration. This fact is one which previous writers on Ukiyo-ye have not always kept clearly in view.

I think I may be pardoned if I say a few words more about the interrelations of these three dominant lines. The history of Ukiyo-ye is the history of a peculiar school of design; and, since the three branches of this school cross and recross one another at intervals as vital factors, it becomes quite impossible to follow the genesis of the aesthetic features of any one line by itself. Just as the art of a race or of a national period must be studied within the circle of its industries as a whole; so must the classifications within the field of Ukiyo-ye as a whole follow rather the chronological order of total groups, than the logical differences in the members of those groups. A history of book-illustration alone would be at best technical, and only imperfectly critical, since the main differences in its own phenomena would remain unexplained. That is,
between a book, and a painting, and a single-sheet print of the time of Okumura Masanobu there are more vital likenesses, than there are between a single-sheet print of Masanobu and one by Katsukawa Shunsho, or between book-illustrations by Masanobu, and Shunsho respectively. The influence of form upon form has to be carefully noted at every step; and the coalescence of these influences into the temporary aesthetic style of a master or a school. Small as is the area of Ukiyo-ye in comparison with the total field of Japanese art, or even with the total field of Japanese painting, it is full of a very large number of profound differences, the true arranging and explaining of which makes up its history. A student might well give his whole life to the investigation of Ukiyo-ye alone, and yet hardly exhaust the field. If, therefore, we are obliged to speak of these many manifestations also as schools, the rank of the word here is different from its application to Ukiyo-ye as a whole. If we may compare the classifications of aesthetic with those of natural history, we may speak of the five main periods of Japanese art as orders, of the eight divisions of Tokugawa art as genera, and of the subdivisions of Ukiyo-ye itself as species. It is these species of Ukiyo-ye that we shall hereafter term “schools.”

But before we come to speak of these schools in detail, I wish to make somewhat of a digression in dilating upon the more general aesthetic features, and the world-influence of Ukiyo-ye as a whole. I have sufficiently emphasized its importance as a mass of historical documents; I have touched lightly upon the illustrative and popular character of its design. But some explanation more special than this is needed of the causes of its extraordinary power to remodel the constructive and educational conceptions of all Western art to-day. In this respect it is indeed only one of an elaborate group of influences in Asiatic art as a whole—Persian, Indian, and Chinese, as well as Japanese: but of all these the Japanese is perhaps the most flexible and potent; and, within the realm of Japanese, that of Ukiyo-ye has come to lead the rest, not merely because of its cheapness and wide circulation, but also because of certain peculiar aesthetic features whose lessons happened to fall upon the European mind at the very time when they were most badly needed.

But this is not all. If the art of Ukiyo-ye has identity with universal principles, it possesses also, in pre-eminent degree the ability to demonstrate these principles. As we sum up the wealth of the world’s historic treasures, and become truly cosmopolitan in the choice of examples, we discern superior educating power in some, and classify the manifestations of this power according to stages in an
ideal and universal system of discipline, a gradual progress from the simplest problems to the most complex. In this way we transcend the tyranny of schools and styles, and become broadly eclectic, finding in Greek sculpture some of the finest solutions in line, and in Venetian painting the ripest illustrations of colour. Yet back of these lies a more basic soil from which they all have grown, a world of simpler yet perfect arts which exhibit in the earliest stages the laws of universal discipline. Of these in Europe the simplest and most basic is Greek drawing, and that pre-eminently in vase-painting. Here the elements of harmonic structure are shown in a few lines, two or three shades of flat satin, and two or three tones of unshaded colour. Yet even here the range of subject and form is very limited. Of later Western forms, book-illustration included, the designs are generally too complicated, too special and too limited to cover the full range of primary problems. Even our collected "grammars of ornament" are extremely deficient in good specimens. The fact is that nowhere can we find a connected and exhaustive system of studies in all the earlier basic disciplines of line, satin, and colour. In music we have Bach, and the long series of experiments that led up to Bach. But no such precious capital of clear models is possessed by Western design. Not until the introduction of oriental art in the present century, and specially of the Ukiyo-ye of the Japanese, did the world begin to conceive of the possible wealth and range of these hidden laws of construction. Here they were made visible, visibly poured out upon every object that a yeomanry of taste might handle. What seemed hard and narrow in Greek art fell into easy place amid this general fecundity. This showed a full spectrum, as it were, where only isolated lines had been seen before. It is for this reason that Japanese book-illustration and single wood prints have been revolutionizing the world's art. In the infinite variety of simple, flat arrangements, they, together with Greek ornament, furnish a grammar of structure which is seen to underlie not only primitive genius, but all the riper and most complex forms of the total of the art of the world,—Greek marbles, and Venetian canvases.

What makes such a marvellous achievement possible is the development of the art of colour-printing. The first advantage of printing is that it concentrates the artist's attention upon the pure element of design, rather than upon the effort of execution. The outline being secured by the block, the whole force may be bent upon filling the areas thus formed. A dozen colour experiments can be made from a single set of blocks, which would never be made if the labour of constant re-drawing had to be assumed. But the great advantage of printing
is the flatness of its tone. The firm spaces being given, the problem is solely how to plan for harmony in their few main differentiations. If these be in the two terms of black and white only, we have the simplest problem of all: one that underlies all visual design not executed in pure line. What flatness does is to work from the main law of subordination. As no small interior differences exist, the large ones are not obscured. A student who learns to design in this way has an enormous advantage, when interior shading and colour differences come to be added. But one who begins with multiplicity seldom achieves unity. No such full series of black and white work exists elsewhere as is found in the Ukiyo-ye books. And when we come to colour work there is a similar range only the single sheet prints here predominate. Where Japanese art starts with two tints only, filling the spaces of even a complex figure design, it lays down the basis of all unity in the after-work of colour. He who cannot handle two tones can never handle a dozen. And after all the possible wealth of combinations in two tones has been exhausted, a third may be added, then a fourth, and then as many as desired. That is exactly the way in which the Ukiyo-ye prints evolved. And the series is so rich and full that it goes far to cover the whole ground. Nowhere else is there anything like it. Greek vases and mosaics do well in their narrow line; but here the whole range of the pictorial world is treated, until a print comes to have almost every quality of a complete painting. From beginning to end the primary laws of unity are preserved and developed; even when flatness comes to enrich its own severity with subtle differences of shading. If a universal treatise on “line, motion, and colour harmony” ever be written, it will have to be based chiefly upon these Japanese prints.

But some reader may say, “If flatness be the sole requisite, why will not stencil-work suffice?” Stencils well handled can do much as Japanese cloth-printing proves. But besides flatness, there lies in Japanese block-printing a more subtle excellence of execution. The heavier tint of the stencil like brush-paint, either soaks leden into a soggy surface, or stands opaque upon it. Colour applied wet will not vibrate, is flat like a barn door. But the Ukiyo-ye print is the meeting of two wonderfully sympathetic surfaces, the un-sandpapered grain of a cherrywood block, and a mesh in the paper of little pulsing vegetable testacles. Upon the one, colour can be laid almost dry; and to the other it may be transferred by a delicacy of personal touch that leaves only a trace of tint balancing lightly upon the tips of the fibres. And from
the interstices of these printed tips the whole luminous heart of the paper
eels up from within, diluting the very substance of the pigment with a soft
golden sunshine. Here, then, in the Japanese print we have flatness combined
with vibration.

This digression to explain the disciplinary value of Ukiyo-ye has been
far from superficial. The very evolution of forms, and schools, and styles is,
in its case, almost identical with the evolution, of a universal system of design;
and a history of Ukiyo-ye which did not proceed along a line indicated by
these technical problems, would just miss its most striking and vital feature.
Moronobu, and Okumura, and Harunobu are names that shall stand throughout
the whole future for elementary principles as solid in their degree, as are the
musical experiments in harmony from Palestrina to Bach. But, in the
twenty examples to which we are here limited, it is manifestly impossible to
demonstrate every point of this order. The range of Japanese solutions of even
the most special problems is so rich, that only a very great multiplicity of
illustrations would be adequate. In subsequent publications the author hopes
to compass a wider series. But here the selection has been carefully made to
cover most of the leading features, each plate being typical of an elaborate
movement. Under each movement the mention of names has been restricted
to the leaders; and, since the reproductions include both book-illustration and
painting, it will be possible to give this brief outline of Ukiyo-ye history,
without affecting its accuracy, the form of a running comment upon the twenty
illustrations.

The Art of Ukiyo-ye commenced in a revival of interest
in Japanese subjects about the opening of the seventeenth century. The
new policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate was yet hardly declared, and an art of
the populace had not yet been differentiated. The newness of the movement lay
less in form than in the range of subjects,—singing-girls, dancers, and a round of
popular amusements from which the samurai were not yet sharply excluded. In
form the art was based solely upon methods of painting long in use by the Tosa
and Kano schools. It was in some sense a synthesis of these. At first it was
purely a pictorial art, for printing was not yet invented. It expanded the minute
Tosa figures of the long scroll, or makimono, to a scale suitable for large
kakekoma; and while it enlarged the incidents of the panorama into
single scenes of richly grouped life, it often isolated figures after the
manners of the Kano portraits. Single figure pieces without backgrounds became
the most common; and so faddled to make the art between the years 1620 and 1660 largely a collection of painted portraits of famous contemporary singers and dancers. If actors were introduced, they were the performers in the stately Nō opera, the modern theatre not being yet invented.

Another change introduced by this first tentative period of Ukiyo-ye art was in the representation of action. The action in the ancient Tosa ikei mon of the thirteenth century had been rich and dramatic but had afterwards degenerated into a few conventional types. The range of action in the Kanō pictures, also, was largely limited by that of the Chinese types they affected. But now the portrait of a dancer required that the whole beauty of the composition should be concentrated upon the lines of movement, the lines of the limbs and of flowing draperies. Here fell in the new aesthetic influence of contemporary costume; and a school soon arose wherein were drawn dancers in line as strong as that of the Kanō, but of an undulating grace unknown since the days of early religious painting, in the second historical period. It was the grace of a new realism. This is the school which we speak of as the school of Iwasa Matahei.

Still another innovation began in the colouring. The colouring of the Kanō school in the preceding period of Hideyoshi's power at Osaka had been extraordinarily rich, based upon heavy opaque pigments darkened with transparent glaze, and monaiced over solid gold grounds. Sometimes the paintings were in ink alone upon gold. But the representation in early Ukiyo-ye of patterns in contemporary Japanese clothing gave to this scale of pigments, even after its disease by the Kanō, a new lease of life. While the aristocratic school of Tokugawa tended more and more to revert to monochrome in painting, it became more and more the Ukiyo-ye alone that preserved the traditional colour of Hideyoshi's court-painter, Kano Yeitoku. This is the colour-style of that same Matahei; and it remains the heritage of all Ukiyo-ye painters with little change down to the second half of the seventeenth century.

As to the personality of this earliest phase of Ukiyo-ye, there is great vagueness in the records. While the samurai patronized the new art, it was perhaps under enough ban to prevent the painters, often skilful amateurs, from signing their names. There is no question that Kano Sanraku, the adopted son of Yeitoku, painted thus, and signed his name. Tradition, ascribes the invention of the school, and its finest achievements up to about 1650, to an artist named Iwasa Matahei. Of the life of this man, whose career
has been treated in the popular romances, very little that is authentic is known. I have never seen a signature of his on a single painting ascribed to him. Even his seals are doubtful. And on the ground of this absence of record it has been lately contended by some Japanese critics that Matahei is a myth. In fact I have been directly attacked by one Tokio paper for my tentative identification of him in an early issue of the Japanese art magazine "Kokkwa."

The case stands thus. Granting to the critic of written documents that it is hard to place this man; yet, if we examine and compare the large mass of Ukiyo-ye paintings that have come down to us from this early day, we find the greatest among them dominated by an artistic individuality so strong and original, and so different from any known Kano, that we are forced to assert the existence of some single great originator. The very course of his advance through thirty or forty years may be traced. It can be seen that the work from 1640 to 1660 falls off in quality, being little more than a weak imitation of this earlier man. To a critical eye the paintings themselves are documents enough. Now, if such a man really existed, and tradition gives his name as Matahei, there seems no good reason, merely because the accounts of Matahei hopelessly conflict, to give up the name altogether. The alternative hypothesis, that an absolutely unknown artist of supreme power worked for forty years and founded a school, without having his name ever guessed at or hinted of in any single existing document, seems to me very much more extravagant. But even so, and if Matahei be but a name, it is of good a name as any other by which to identify our unknown hero. And thus we shall speak of Matahei as the center of the first Ukiyo-ye movement.

Of the thousands of works of lesser quality, some contemporary with Matahei, some to be ascribed to the following years, few have any seals, and still fewer have signatures. I have chosen for representation in Plate I one of these rarities, because its quality is so fine and typical that, were it not for the signature, it might well be ascribed to the later days of Matahei himself. It will thus serve as a type of the portraits of this school. The signature is "Ukiyo-ye Masayoshi," which proves that the artist was a member of a recognized popular school whose distinctions from that of the aristocrats were becoming marked. "Ukiyo" means "The Floating World," that is, the transitory world of fashion and frivolity, despised by the Buddhist and Confucian censors who ever aimed at a world of moral and intellectual "fixity." It does not follow that "Ukiyo" had yet become used as the name of a school; but the signature would at least mean "Masayoshi, a deliberate
Matahei also is called in the earliest accounts of him "Ukiyo Matahei;" and one account which speaks of a Masayoshi,—probably this same man,—calls him the son of Matahei. Surely he was the artistic son, and this is one of the earliest authentic signatures that we find. It may be ascribed to a date about 1640 or 1650. In technique it follows Matahei's later method of rendering the white brocades of his day, shot with finely sprinkled silver and ornamented with sparse large patterns in full colour. The grace of the drapery is essentially of Matahei. And the ink painting on the gold fan, in the style of a Kano Yeitsoku landscape, is a case of the survival in Ukiyo-ye of a style and a colouring long gone out in the Kano school itself. The present condition of the original painting is here perfectly reproduced by wood-printing, and on the original scale. The head-dress was probably a cloth woven of solid silver threads. A dominance of black was secured in the hair, the handle of the fan, and in the belt, where, however, the heaviness of its mass is softened by fine gold tracery. It is such colouring that paved the way for Momonobu's more brilliant painting in the next generation. The figure represents a man, and in the act of singing as well as dancing.

The second movement in Ukiyo-ye, and that from which it can be more certainly described as a separate school, took place in the latter part of the seventeenth century, roughly from 1670 to 1700. This period, which contains the great carnival era, Genrok, was that in which the consciousness of a break between the upper stratum of the aristocrats and the lower of the workers was beginning. It had not yet hardened into the forbidding barriers of caste; but the wealth and pleasure of the new great capital Edo were pouring in an enormous current, for good or ill, toward some definite change. The consciousness of a broader life was already making for a new culture, in which at first, to a great extent, the samurai shared. Already this was shown in the sudden development of book-publishing, and of printed illustrations for books. The book generally cited as the one in which such illustration first appeared bears the date 1648. Pictorial printing in Chinese books had long been known, and had been used in Japan before this, though sporadically, for religious picture sheets. But, in any case, a sudden revival of literature, the first rapid creation of printed editions, and an increasing use of illustrations for books, undoubtedly mark the years from about 1640 to 1670. This illustration was at first rather poor and rough, based partly on the coarser Chinese examples, partly on traits of the Yeitsoku school of native design. It cannot be said that the designers acquired fame, or can be always
identified with the Ukiyo-ye; though among these books are to be found a few precursors of the encyclopaedias and mirrors of fashion which became so common in subsequent centuries. Another movement that belongs to this time is the editions of rough paintings called Otsu-ye; and another is the introduction and rapid development at fairs of mountebank shows and puppet dramas, which were preparing the way for a regular theatre. Life had grown excessively gay, and picnic parties, a recognized Yedo institution, were already the rage among all classes of society.

The right man to seize these new conditions, and utilize the opportunity for a great school of popular design came from Kioto in the person of Hishigawa Moronobu. By training he was a designer for the rich Kioto silk fabrics. As a painter he was well drilled in the technique of the new Kano school of Tanyu; and could produce a Rakemono which for delicacy of touch and tint rivalled even the work of the Shogun's favourite, Tsunenobu. But his greatest genius lay in his power to seize the new channel of book-illustration, and pour into it every vigour of fresh conception. Reprints of old romances, new editions of famous poems, encyclopaedias, the various occupations of women, scenes from history, the panorama of the street, picnic-parties, jollity at fairs, and portraits of dancers—it was all one to him; he dignified everything he touched by a power of sweeping line that was new to Eastern illustration, and by a massing of black which renders his work a treasury to students of notan for all time. But he did not stop at the books, He took this chance of making single sheet prints supersede the inadequate Otsu-ye, using large paper and bold design for the printed outlines, and sometimes touching up portions with brush work in orange and green. These precursors of the single sheet prints of Kiyonaga and Hokusai began to appear somewhere about 1670, and are, for magnificence as well as variety, reckoned today the greatest possible treasures of an Ukiyo-ye collector.

It will thus be seen that Moronobu is the first of those great Ukiyo-yobabi who unite in themselves mastery of all the three lines of its work. This gives him far more influence than Matahei. He is indebted to Matahei for almost nothing except an extreme grace in pictorial line. In colour he represents, within the domain of Ukiyo-ye, a late transference of supremacy from the school of Yetsoku to the school of Tsunobu. In the oranges and greens of the single sheet prints alone is there a trace of the ancient colour derived through the Otsu-ye. But, after all, it is in book-illustration that his work has greatest force. Here he
did things that have never been surpassed. His strongest work lying between the years 1670 and 1690. His paintings were eagerly sought for by the daimyōs and his finest pieces have come, in recent years, from the hereditary collections of the nobles. By the commencement of the great period, Genroku, 1688, his school and fame were firmly established. It was he who illustrated the carnival. A large number of artists were his professional pupils, and, more secretly, many amateurs among the noblemen. Even Kano Takanobukai designed occasionally to follow in his footsteps. All these pupils imitated his manner along his several lines; but their paintings are now more common than their prints. Minoshige and Morofusa are the greatest, but they do not rival the master's power. He grew more effeminate in his later years; and his fertile school kept up the traditions of this later style, gradually hardening, for many years after the founder's death, indeed as late as 1720 or 1730. But after the seventeenth century it ceases to be important.

The specimen of Moronobu's work chosen for Plate IX, is a double page print from one of the finest of his illustrated books, the "Iwaki Yedanokashi", dated 1682. The text is a running commentary along the top; and is rather an accompaniment to the picture than of prime importance. The picture represents a group of girls at an exhibition of chrysanthemum flowers; it is reproduced in absolute full scale of the original, and by identical methods. Here the splendid and characteristic helmet-shaped hair arrangement for women, of the late years of the seventeenth century, is well shown. Aesthetically, the spotting of the black is simple, and the variegation of pattern on the dresses gives the hint of an intermediate third tone.

A third stage of Ukiyo-ye opens with the seventeenth century. The gap between gentry and commoners is becoming wider. Laws restrict the knights from the excesses of Genroku; pleasure houses and the vulgar theatre are forbidden haunts. It is a puritanical reaction, needful perhaps; and in it the prints of the Ukiyo-ye come in for special condemnation because of lending their attraction to the lowest kinds of novels. On the other hand, in technique, the beauties of the Moronobu school have degenerated into mannerism and hardness, and are too tame to interest either class. It is a crisis in the history of Ukiyo-ye; for the people are almost entirely cut off from the culture of the palaces, and will henceforth have to rely upon their own untutored genius if a popular school is to be maintained. Hence it is that the Schools succeeding Moronobu's tended to separate themselves into two
rival camps; one of which, though being Ukiyo-ye, should still strive to interest the patronage of the aristocrats, as Moronobu had done, by both subject and manner; the other, casting away all tradition derived from the past, should address itself to the sole problem of finding new ways to amuse the people. The badge of the former school was that it eschewed print-designing altogether, and confined itself to the gentlemanly art of painting; of the latter that, while it occasionally painted in a strange uncouth manner, it directed its chief strength to the line of print-designing in both single sheets and books. The founders of both these schools had been pupils of the Hishigawa academy; but now, after Moronobu’s death, they stood forth from the mass of his pupils, offering fresh powers and new beauties to the waiting future. The leader of the school of painting was Miyagawa Choshun. The leader of the school of printing was Torii Kiyonobu. We shall first consider the former school.

Choshun was a vigorous genius who fairly succeeded in whatever he undertook. Throughout his life, so far as we know, he never executed a print; and he really infused rich colour and broad effect into Moronobu’s somewhat hard pictorial style. By acquiring great facility in the Kano handling of landscape accessories, he retained the affection of the samurai, from whose transmitted collections his masterpieces have largely come in modern times. In this respect he stands to Moronobu much as in the Shogun’s court Chikanobu stood to Tsunenobu. It must be remembered also that these were the days of the popularity of Korin and Katsushika; and in all directions a host of innovators were aiming at fresh quality and intenser feeling. Doubtless Choshun felt these influences, and being really a colour-genius, responded with broadly placed harmonies that quite transcended the resources of any of the ancient schools. Both Matabei and Moronobu had tended to restrict themselves to the narrow palette of the Kano pigments, reds, yellows, blues, and greens; and in the case of Moronobu his very love for pattern led him sometimes into tracing it too mechanically. But with Choshun, pattern became the occasion for throwing in magnificent spots to modulate the colour harmonies of his grounds, and the colours themselves were now enriched with a new scale of strange browns, olives, purples, and grays. This first quarter of the eighteenth century was an age of splendid pattern in garments, large, sweeping areas of pattern, as distinguished from the finely dispersed medallions of Genroku; patterns that often failed to repeat from neck to heel, and boldly cut one tint by large unexpected angles of another thrust into, or flung across it. The use that was eventually
made of this splendid wealth of colour and freedom of manner, we shall see when we come to Harunobu, fifty years later.

Choshun's subjects were very much like those of Moronobu, covering as they did the new range of "The Floating World," and also the stock motives of the Kano school. He was especially fond of the panoramic makinomae form, in which he threw groups of richly attired wanderers against beautiful landscape backgrounds. And though, in his later days, he painted portraits of single noted belles, yet the street-scene of Yedo remained to the end his forte. His example inspired a host of more or less original imitators. It cannot be said that he founded a disciplined academy, like Moronobu. We cannot identify this galaxy of painters as his personal pupils; though it is clear that his freedom and force animates them all. Kaigetsudo, Tsuneyuki, Choki and Katsunobu are some of them, who, for the most part, are also great original colourists, and who, with the exception of Kaigetsudo, entirely ignore printing. This group formed by far, to their contemporaries, the most conspicuous part of Ukiyo-ye, between the years 1700 and 1725. Their descendants of a second generation preserved three characteristics of their art down to 1765— their avoidance of prints, their wealth of colour, and, though. they gradually lost the samurai patronage, their claim to be true successors of the ancient Tosa line of national painters. Thus the gap between the pictorial and printing schools remained a long one; and we shall defer speaking of the second leader of the pictorial, Choshun's follower, Shunsui, until a later paragraph.

The specimen of Choshun's work here reproduced (Plate III.) is a group taken from a hadenomae; a lady, and her attendant who offers her a fan. Its date is between 1715 and 1720. The simplicity of the female coiffure at this date may be contrasted with the elaborate style of Moronobu's print (Plate II.). It is these constant variations in hair arrangement and in the patterns of dresses which furnish our most important evidence for determining dates.

Now, leaving the pictorial school, let us pass over to the avowedly vulgar branch of print-designers who, lived and worked on, parallel to it, for the first half of the eighteenth century. These humbler artists fully understood what a rich world it was that the knighthly class had ostracized—the illustrated novel, the encyclopaedia, the single sheet print. And, moreover, at this time, a new and absorbing subject of interest had pushed to the front. This was the Yedo theatre just developing into full power under the first and second Ichikawa Danjuro, whose
descendant in the ninth generation even now is delighting the people of Tokio. It became a startling mirror of life, contemporary and historical, to a populace that had never developed a self-consciousness, or an organ for independent expression. Forbidden to the amuru, it was purely a plebeian institution; but the authors who came to draft new plays for it, based largely upon romantic history, soon achieved a power and freedom, which in nature and causes are not unlike those of the Jacobean theatre of London. If not for genius quite so transcendent, at least for social parallel, Chikamatsu has well been called the Shakespeare of Japan. Now, from the first, during Genroku or even earlier, some attempt had been made to produce in rough wood-cuts hand-bills and advertising cards of the new performances. By 1715, the personality of actors had become so passionately loved by the half-intoxicated people, that portraits of them in characteristic parts became demanded almost to the exclusion of the hitherto popular portraits of the belles. Here was a superb opportunity for some new school, to cap the resources of printing with an elaborate illustration of the whole theatre itself. And it is for this reason that the printing of theatrical portraits absorbs a large part of the attention of Torii Kiyonobu and his fellow-workers.

What might be said of the aesthetic value of this school has been largely forestalled by the remarks on prints in general. In a special sense it is this school that is the true and third foundation of Ukiyo-ye proper. Matabei introduced popular subjects into painting. Moronobu demonstrated the possibilities of book-illustration in general. But Kiyonobu was the first to grasp the aesthetic possibilities of printing as the reflex of a frankly vulgar popular consciousness, relieved from all obligation to any upper tier of fastidious tradition. Without the vigour of his new effort Ukiyo-ye might have fallen back and been re-absorbed into the old national schools. Henceforth its fate must be bound up with the development of prints, which shall advance in a logical series from the simplest beginnings to the most elaborate impressions. The root is undoubtedly in Moronobu; but whether or not any growth should spring from this root depended upon the men of Hidei and Kishob (1700–1736). And another proof of the separation of this movement from that of Hishigawa is that it more largely develops single sheet printing than book-illustration. The latter, which had been Moronobu's greatest line of work, now fell off markedly; and in the early days of the Torii artists the single sheet prints became the rage among the masses.
Heretofore Ukiyo-ye schools have centered about individuals.—Matakei, Moronobu, Choshun. In this new rich school of prints it is so no longer; and the basis of our classifications can become chronological only in ceasing to be biographical. This is so for several reasons. First it is the evolution in the quality of the prints themselves that most interests us, and this progressed far during the lives of several individuals. The fact that Torii Kiyonobu was so long lived that his mature work ranges from 1700 to 1750, brought him into contact with a host of social conditions, under which grasp of which he manifested new creative powers. Second, it happened that Kiyonobu was only one of a group of three remarkable men, all of whom worked together from 1700 to 1750, went through similar changes, and contributed each something to the wealth of result and to the training of a band of pupils and vigorous sub-branches of their main schools. If we take the leaders alone there are twenty powerful men, and this field we must now proceed to subdivide according to the several stages of their common progress. It may be stated first, however, that the three founders were Torii Kiyonobu, Torii Kiyomasa, and Okumura Masanobu. The first two, who were probably brothers, are very nearly alike in style; but Okumura, from the beginning, stands for a separate and splendid branch of this main stem. His style is more pictorial, and he works more frequently in painting; also his subjects are not so exclusively of actors as are those of the Torii. In some sense he stands between the latter and Choshun. Still it is the prints, upon which his fame, in common with Kiyonobu’s, chiefly rests; and we must speak of them both in equal measure under every vital difference of phase.

The first stage in this evolution of the prints lasts from 1700 to about 1715. It is a rich expansion of the rare single sheets of Moronobu. They are now of three kinds, sheets very large like those of Moronobu, with one or two figures; sheets small and narrow, with the first representations of actors; and sheets small and square, issued in series, and illustrating chiefly the occupations of women. These latter are always in ink outline and correspond to Moronobu’s book-illustrations. The actors are often coloured roughly by hand, at first in low tones derived from Moronobu’s olives, but soon with an orange derived from the same source. But the large sheets are, without doubt, the most important product of this period. These are splendid and florid in style, comparing chronologically with the large paintings of ladies of the Choshun school, and sharing with those the rich crtatic patterning of contemporary costume. Like Moronobu’s, they are most
carefully printed in ink from a single block, and generally on two pieces of paper pasted together; but their lines better reproduce the rich broad sweep of a full Japanese brush than do Moronobu's more wiry designs. Part of the edition was issued and sold in this uncoloured form; but a choice part was retained for further careful working up with the brush, and in tints of which the Moronobu orange was by far the most conspicuous. This was no longer applied in small dabs upon the ornaments, but with the deliberate intention of filling carefully the large spaces, such as the hakama, or ceremonial skirt, of a leading figure. Sometimes it alone was used, making a striking harmony of orange and black; sometimes sober tints, olives and dull yellow, were added, as a kind of ground for the orange, but never any other brilliant hue. This sort of print was, and is still called tan-ye, tan being the name of the pigment which we call red lead. I used to think that the tan-ye formed a separate stage that grew out of sumi-ye, or ink prints; but the subsequent appearance of the same design in both forms led me to see that the use of tan grew out of the sumi which Moronobu used sparingly upon his sumi-ye. Some collectors admire the pure ink design more than the hand-coloured, others prize above all a rare, fine sumi. It is difficult to say which is the more beautiful. Aesthetically each has its place, and illustrates a stage in the normal growth of colour out of gray. Toward 1715 the production of these large sheets fell off; and the use of the tan colouring was restricted to the small narrow sheets of the actor prints. I am sorry here not to be able to illustrate the tan-ye; but, after all, they are only an introduction to the form of which I shall next speak.

The second stage in the growth of the prints is what dealers now generally group together under the name urushi-ye, or "lacquer-painting," although, as a fact, lacquer was not invariably used. To speak of it as a school of "hand-coloured prints" would be more correct. This movement lasted, roughly speaking, from 1715 to 1742. It is almost entirely absorbed with the small narrow sheets of designs of actors, and proves how wonderfully, for the moment, interest in the theatre had overshadowed all other popular amusements. Illustrated books other than rough novelettes are, in these days, rare at Yedo; though in Kioto an artist called Nishikawa Sukenobu, taking his cue from Moronobu, issued between these dates a large series of books. The urushi-ye grew out of the tan-ye actor prints by substituting other colours for tan. At first a dominant colour was retained in tan red, which took the place of tan; and a series of rare prints hand-coloured with hanni, between 1715 and 1720, have been sometimes called kuroka-ye, or "black pictures." The kuroka-ye are the connecting link between the tan-ye and the urushi-ye proper. These latter soon
reduced the *hendi* to a subordinate position, adding brilliant yellows, olives, and browns, and especially a rich glossy black of pigment mixed with lacquer. Soon were added light spaces smeared with lacquer into which were sprinkled gold and silver powders. Speaking generally, this profusion of hand-applied colours marked an aesthetic loss of the strong normal simplicity that had lain in the dispositions of ink and *tani*. It was not easy to dispose of the colours in flat tones, and so the primary stages of synthesis were, for the moment, lost. Nevertheless in the finer specimens splendid simple harmonies were achieved, among which perhaps the finest are those in which olive and black serve as a background for either red or yellow. These schemes of colouring were something absolutely new not only in Ukiyo-ye but in Japanese art. They were the experiments in colour which an independent popular consciousness was making; experiments destined profoundly to affect the future of all Japanese industries, and eventually the colour-sense of the world. There is evidence that the aristocrats regarded them with the utmost horror. They mark a complete rupture between the two halves of the Edo world. They freed the power of colour to work and create in its own right. For it must not be supposed that the whole edition of a single print was coloured in a single scheme. The artists or workmen often created fresh combinations of tints, sheet by sheet. So there is almost infinite wealth for a student in this unfrequented field.

As in the *tanzaku* all three artists worked in the *uszuki-ye*, though Masanobu tended at this period to make many paintings also in the new colouring. I have chosen as my single illustration of *uszuki-ye* a print by Masanobu representing the actor Ichikawa Danjuro the second, head of the Edo stage. It is of about the year 1735. In the original the lines only were printed from blocks, but here the careful hand-colouring has been well given through the skill of modern printing; the colours showing the present state of the original. Thus the lining of the outer-garment, visible at several points, is a tint faded from an original *hendi* rose. The olives have probably changed but little. Here we can see well what fine chances were given the colour-designer by the strange large dress-patterns of the day, which, doubtless, the stage exaggerated. A complete bust of the popular saint Daruma, with flesh in gray, was woven into the garment. To see the full bearing of painting on the prints it needs only to conceive plate IV, as an intervening link between plates III. and V.

We come now to the third stage of the Torii prints, which lasts from about 1742 to about 1758. It also is dominated by the same three wonderful old men, Kiyonobu, Kiyomasu, and Masanobu; but they have gathered about themselves a
host of followers.—Kiyotada, Toshinobu, Nishimura Shigenobu, Nishimura Shigenaga, Toyonobu, Kiyojiro and Kiyomitsu being the chief. Of these the first three are known only in urushi-ye; the next two both in urushi-ye and the new style which now succeeds, and the last two only in the new style. This new style is the momentous innovation of substituting blocks for printing flat colours in place of the previous hand-applied tints. No one man can be given sole credit for it; all contributed something to the beauty of the result. During this third stage only two colour-blocks were used, generally for tints of rose and green; the legitimate successors of the beni-ye, and of the red and olive of the urushi-ye. Moreover the rose was the very same pigment, beni, now prepared for printing; and thus this new form of the Ukiyo-ye print has acquired the general name beni-ye.

But it is not in colour-printing alone, and in the aesthetic changes involved, that the prints of this age are characterized. Other changes contributed. The excessive popular interest in the theatre had settled into more normal proportions, and afforded room for a return to a wider range of Ukiyo-ye subjects: noted women, street-scenes, and incidents from history. For these latter purposes a return was made to the use of large sheets also, now single pieces of paper which sometimes became as much as four feet in length. The regular, small, actor sheet persisted as the core of popular editions; but it is notable that almost no large sheet prints were issued between 1720 and 1740. And now it was rather Okimura Masanobu, than the Torii, who went back to the earlier forms, the large designs of single girls, and the wide street scenes.

The execution, however, had greatly changed. The figures now became tall and graceful, the head-dress again helmet shaped, the features long and aristocratic; and the whole design especially planned for an elaborate filling in of colour. It is this power to design in colour and for colour, instead of using colour as a superficial embellishment, that is now seen to be the solid result of prolonged experiment with urushi-ye. Indeed, for some years after the new discovery of colour-printing, the old hand-method was still deliberately used for the larger and more expensive sheets, although the rose and green tints were always used for the cheap actor prints. Among the most superb colour specimens of Ukiyo-ye are Masanobu's large hand-colours of about the date 1750, when he must have been eighty years of age. But even then this veteran foresaw the eventual triumph of the cheaper method, and, with all the ardour of a young boy, plunged into the first experiments of what was to become a new educational colour series for the world.

And it was not alone the single sheet print that Masanobu revived in these latter days. Book-illustration, which had languished since Momosabu, he now began
to restore with a charming series of plates in ink outline. The spur here was doubtless the work of Sukematu, whose books, issued during the interval for a Kioto populace, were rapidly becoming known in the Eastern capital. As if in derision, too, of the incapacity of the Ukiyo-ye-shi, a Kano pupil, Morikuni, was making an attempt to popularize the aristocratic school by republishing in wood-prints the ancient designs of Chinese artists, of the Ashikaga priests, and especially of the still idolized master, Tanyu. This movement was somewhat in the nature of a bridge thrown across the tremendous gap between the upper and the lower classes; but it was disregarded by the people. It was Masanobu who saw that book-prints, rather than actor sheets, ought to be the most potent force of Ukiyo-ye; and who took for model the subjects of many of Sukematu's tamer books, the occupations of women. From this time onward no break occurs in the series of books down to Hokusai. Shigenaga and Toyonobu were successors to Masanobu in all these lines.

But, after all, though these revived styles promised much, yet for the moment, it cannot be denied that popular and aesthetic interest centered still in the actor prints, embellished as they were with the novelty of printed colours. Here the two other veterans, Kiyomasa and Kiyomasa, also about eighty years old, still stood at the head, closely followed by their young descendants, (grandchildren probably) Kiyohiro and Kiyomitsu. There is no harmonic arrangement to be built out of green and rose that Kiyomasa did not attempt. Within such narrow limits of design, attention is rigidly forced upon the problem of relative distribution. There can be no fatal freedom as when, with a child's brush, we may dab a hundred random tints upon a hundred chance areas. Here not only beauty, but variety, distinction of parts, the way of cutting large parts with small, the planning of dress-patterns so as to make of them integral parts of a harmonious whole, all these have to be worked for with the minimum of resource. It is a problem akin to the splendid one of the Greek vase designers. Kiyomasa had a fine chance to practice with the popular dress patterns of the day, the tendency of which was toward checks and plaids. The way in which he could vary these in size and juxtaposition the next plate, No. V, will show. This reproduces a typical two-coloured actor print of Kiyomasa, of about the date 1750. The standing male figure is evidently in a part where he is disguised as a seller of fans. The girl kneeling below has selected one of his wares and now wishes to receive it. Let us study the resources of this typical print, considered purely as design. We have a pale pink and a darker green.
But beyond these we have the white ground of the paper, and the black of the original ink block; four tones in fact, to weave into an effective counterpoint. To enumerate the main progressions only—we may throw green against pink, green against white, green against black, pink against white, pink against black, or white against black. Next, we may combine any two of these against a third. Next, we can vary any of these ratios, by restricting the area of one of its members. This is most beautifully done, for pictorial purposes, by varying the way in which pattern runs into a ground. A minute red traceroy over a white ground, as in the lady's sleeve, is softened and diluted into a paler pink; against which the solid red and green check of the man's figure becomes a colour value. Contrast with this check the green and white check of the peddler's box. Note the naturalistic use of green and red in the peony patterns on the sleeve; also the series of effects that lie in contrasting the various curves of the lady's dress with the angular spaces of the man's costume. Note also the variety that springs from omitting the black boundary line of some of the areas, as in the curtain and the box. And, lastly, do we wonder that the lady gazes longingly upon such a fan,—white, cut with a sharp pine branch in black,—which stands out as a beautiful neutral spot against the tinted masses? Here, to say no more, we find Kiyonobu speaking to us in a language which has many hundred vocabularies, though all spelled with only a few letters. And remember that this is but one of ten thousand prints in two colours, always varying slightly the tints of red and green, always trying new steps upon the vibrating spaces of the areas. I do not think any other people have ever paused to exhaust so simple a problem. The repeating patterns in Arabic design have no such wealth of chance. It is much more than a geometric band upon a Greek temple. It pours the whole freedom of pictorial design into this narrow mould. Sooner or later our students will have to come to repeat such experiments for themselves. Meanwhile the Japanese solutions stand as an isolated chapter in our text-book of harmony.

The fourth stage in the evolution of the actor prints is now upon us. It is a brief one, lasting only from about 1755 to 1755. Let us be thankful that this inevitable change did not come sooner; for, temporarily, it almost produces discordance. It is the introduction of a third colour block. The green and rose had been so perfectly balanced, that our eye is offended by the intruding yellow. But it was really a step in advance; for if one cannot balance three colours, what hope has he with a dozen? Moreover, it admitted the possibility of a great variety of triangular combinations. The retention of the original green and rose was not
necessary. Olives and blues and dark earth reds might be taken as bases. But out of the midst of a thousand experiments the prevailing tendency was toward choosing for the three colour blocks, red (brown), blue and yellow. The Japanese dealers include such work also under the head of beni-ye.

The subjects treated did not vary much from the days of Masanobu’s two-colour work. Actor prints held the chief place; but larger and more careful prints, sometimes including eight or ten figures in close composition, were worked out in the three tones. The single portraits were now almost never as large as those of Masanobu; and the tall single sheet gradually had its width contracted to a size that would hang conveniently against the pillar of a house or room. This is the evolution of the so-called hakemono-ye out of the Masanobu large sheet print; and it became more common during this transition period. Book illustration, too, was far from being neglected. Delicate outline prints of boys and girls at play, by Toyonobu, had followed Masanobu’s more robust series; and now, since 1750, had appeared in the illustrations the work of a new man, Suzuki Harunobu, pupil of Shigenaga, whose poetic treatment of young girl-figures in outline barely fails to surpass all previous designs. It is to the single sheet prints, however, of the actor series, whether large or small, that we must turn to trace the line of development. In these, after the nearly simultaneous deaths of Kiyonobu and Kiyomasa, it was Torii Kiyomitsu who at once took the lead. He it was who tried the richest experiments in three tones. With him was a less prolific alter ego, Kiyohiro; and, coming into more or less friendly rivalry with these two, Shigenaga, Toyonobu, and Harunobu. As the competition was keen, so was the advance rapid; and, as the years drew on toward that central Ukiyo-ye date of 1795, it was clear that the two most original minds, Kiyomitsu and Harunobu, were running a breathless race for supremacy. Of them Kiyomitsu excelled in subtle choice of tone; Harunobu in grace of drawing, and the power to dispose of his tints in a way to produce charming naturalistic effects.

It almost seems a pity that this series so rapidly came to an end; because there are, doubtless, a thousand more solutions that the world would prize. The end came in this way. It was soon discovered that, by printing one tint over another, a compound colour was produced, that might be worked into the composition designedly as a fourth tone. This was certainly one of the considerations that turned the final choice of basic tints to red, yellow and blue. Harunobu, especially, made splendid use of the secondaries of superposition, greens, purples, and occasional low-toned oranges. *Were we to analyze the possibilities here as
we did in the case of Kiyomitsu’s two colours, we should find ourselves, though
with only three colour blocks, yet in possession of several thousand explicable
differences in design, any or all of which could be finely used in problems of
pictorial construction. The areas were being enriched to a high point of
expressiveness, and were capable of much realistic rendering. It seemed evident
that the next step would be to reach the multiplicity of colours directly by the use
of many separate colour blocks, rather than by superposition.

The specimen here chosen for Plate VI is an actor print of the ordinary
small size, by Torii Kiyomasu, of about the date 1740. It should be carefully
compared with Plate V. Here the primary colours have been chosen for the main
blocks, and only one superposition, of blue and yellow, indulged in for green.
How finely this latter can be used, with yellow itself, as a differentiating factor,
may be seen in the rendering of the tree. Mark the peculiar effect of the small
blue and white check on the tobacco-tray. Even at this very day Kiyomasu had,
in training, a young adopted son called Kiyonaga, who was destined, twenty-five
years later, to carry Ukiyo-ye to its pinnacle of achievement.

We must now review briefly the ground over which we have passed
during the last fourteen paragraphs. We have followed the development of actor
prints by a continuous course through four stages, from 1726 to 1765; a course
always dominated by members of the Torii school. Leaving out differences, let
the mind dwell for a moment upon this movement as a whole. It is the real
trunk of the Ukiyo-ye, a solid training in elements of design that has now fitted
it to bear its finest blossoms. But in looking back, we must not fail to remember
that there was a separate branch of Ukiyo-ye running side by side with it, namely,
a long line of painters derived from Miyagawa Choshun. I promised to speak
later of the final stages of this painter’s school, and the time has now come.

Of all Choshun’s followers one—pupil and perhaps son—called
Miyagawa Shunsui, gave promise of developing out of his master’s school a
pictorial design that, gradually cutting itself off from Kano tradition, should base
itself upon the refined presentation of women in new and most exquisite colours.
He availed himself to the utmost of the resources of the large, striking patterns that
characterized the costume of 1730. And when the new movement of Okumura
Masanobu came in from 1740 to 1750, he accommodated his design to the
soberer taste for small running patterns and checks. About this time he changed
his name from Miyagawa Shunsui to Kabukiza Shunsui. Some critics have
believed him, under this new cognomen, a different man. But style and hand-
writing prove his identity. He became the center of a great school of painters, parallel with the Torii, from 1740 to 1765; the chief of whom, after him, was Tsunenaga. Shunsui never ceased to grow, and gradually developed his powers into a splendid mastery of line,—that of original colour harmony having been his dower from the first. But he never condescended, until after 1765, to attempt print making, and then only once or twice. He is thus a conspicuous example of the link we should lose in Ukiyo-ye history, should we try to trace the course of printing alone. His work was deeply influenced by that of Okumura Masanobu; and his great pupil, Katsukawa Shunsho, became the teacher of Hokusai. But his importance lies far beyond the range of facts like these. It was he that retained and perfected important elements of design neglected by the contemporary, actor-drawing Torii artists,—elements of design that were to enter most powerfully into all subsequent development of Ukiyo-ye. These were solidity of realistic design, a nameless charm in the refined treatment of women, and a massive fullness of colour, with landscape background. Whatever the print series accomplished, it was not primarily this; and Harunobu alone in his books before 1765 had absorbed the delicate treatment of girls, partly from Okumura, partly from Shunsui himself. But as time drew on toward 1765, and Harunobu’s experiments in colour printing had led him to the realistic multiplication of tints, he calmly contemplated a revolutionary step which should carry the whole wealth of pictorial design over into printing. In looking about him for models of perfect effect, it was upon Shunsui’s painting that his choice rested. And thus Shunsui becomes a more important ancestor of Harunobu, than his professed teacher Shigenaga.

But before entering upon Harunobu’s changes, let us pause a moment to enjoy the beauties of Shunsui’s design for their own sake. The magnificent example that appears in Plate VII, is a fac simile reproduction in colour and size of the central part of a kakebugyō on silk by Shunsui, of about the date 1761. It represents three young ladies practising their music lessons upon the verandah of a private house. One plays upon the stringed samisen; another accompanies with the clarinet-like shakuhachi; while the third sings from the score in her hand. They are all seated upon a light cotton rug, such as we find in Japan to-day; and their rich costumes of modest pattern seem to be those of girls of high rank. Nothing could be much more beautiful than the line structure; of their solidly composed figures, were it not the colours themselves with which their areas are filled. One must here glance back to Plate III, to estimate the ground that has been gained. Such colouring has been unknown before. Many European
collectors pretend to scoff at Ukiyo-ye paintings, refusing to hear of any connection between the colouring of these and that of the prints. Yet here is a true connecting link between Masanobu and Harunobu, though out of these critics' ken. Nothing so exquisite as the blue shot with green sprays of the samisen-player's underdress had ever been achieved by the prints; and nowhere are there to be found colour passages like the olive brown haori with dark-coloured flower wreaths, and the cool olive green dress sprinkled with ginko leaves in cyan blues and blood reds.

We have now fairly reached the pregnant year 1765, by two independent lines of approach. Let us pause and see what the new problem in the mind of Suzuki Harunobu really was. Tersely we may state it to be the combining of the two streams that had flowed on apart since 1700. One had aimed specifically at the painting of refined subjects, and had eschewed prints; the other had limited its range to actors printed in a few colours. The two had culminated in Shunsui and Kiyomitsu respectively; (see Plates VI. and VII.) Why should not all the characteristic traits of the former be brought over to enrich the form of the latter? The time was ripe for it. The theatre no longer monopolized popular interest. The Ukiyo-ye had become a school of national importance. It was time that the stigma of vulgarity be removed from it. Let printing raise itself to the dignity that painting assumed. "Though I work in prints," declared Harunobu, "I shall style myself hereafter 'Yamato Yeshi.'"—the title of the ancient court painters in the second period. This term may be paraphrased, "Painting master of the national school of Japan."

In technical fitness to solve this fine problem Harunobu was certainly the ideal man. He had begun his apprenticeship under Shigenaga and Masanobu, had seen the introduction of colour-printing, and had designed for the green and rose block himself. For line, he had trained himself in an exquisite series of book-illustrations since 1750; and finally, in colour, it was he who had stretched the use of multiple superposed tints to its limit in rivalry with Kiyomitsu's three-colour-block style. Every condition of colour-block printing was ready for the change, and had been made so by his own effort. If print designing had already become virtually a solid arrangement in six or eight basic tones, why not free the range of tones by adopting one colour block for each, instead of depending on the limited resources of the three primaries? And this is exactly what Harunobu did in the great year 1765. Instead of red, green, and blue, he chose soft, flat tones of grays and olives for his backgrounds of sky, water, earth, or wall,—backgrounds which had heretofore been left of the white paper. This was
an important step toward pictorial effect; it gave atmosphere, and made every area of the design enter into the colour-symphony. Against these grounds he then threw up his figures in stronger tints, each having a separate block to secure its exact value; figures and groups which celebrated the finest charm of his earlier line-illustrations. In this way he produced what soon became celebrated throughout the provinces as "Yedo Nishiki-ye," or "brocade painting."

Harunobu fully developed this new style in the year 1765, and often celebrated his triumph by weaving into some part of the picture the date "Meiwa 2nd." But he never ceased year by year until his death, about 1772, to make new experiments in papers, pigments, and combination. For this reason the variety of Harunobu's work during the last seven years of his life is extraordinary. We can trace his course almost from season to season. Each year has its peculiar beauties. Some European collectors affect to care only for his prints of 1765; but this is narrow. He reached his greatest beauty of colour perhaps in 1768; and then developed into more powerful line and grander notation. He particularly loved to work in the difficult shape of the hakenomono. He very rarely painted after 1765; though he still did some book illustration, and now in simple scales of his new colouring.

But, after all, it is in the small square sheets of his domestic scenes that we best know and love him. Of these there is a rich unbroken series down to his death, each one of which may well be considered the treasure of a collection. The one selected for reproduction in Plate VIII, is a beautiful print of late 1768 or early 1769. A young girl, daughter of the house, has turned from her morning dusting at the entrance of her brother, and, before noticing the tame mouse which he holds, makes this charming plea—

I've dusted as our mother bade,
And yet have left one spot.
How could I brush the pine-tree shade
From off the window-pane?

The poem appears in writing across the top of the picture, and, as it is a famous one, written long before Harunobu's day, we may conclude that the artist deliberately took the words for a subject. Indeed, this is a favorite device of his, and adds exquisite literary charm to what is already a visual delight. Apparently ten colour blocks have been used in addition to the ink-block. How wonderfully this wealth of colour is disposed on background and costumes without confusion, requires study to appreciate. For instance, the light gray blue, though recurring in
touchees on the garments, is practically reserved for the plaster walls of the room. It is cut on one side by the cool olive green of the boy's coat, and on the other by the cold violet of the girl's dress. There are four reds, all carefully distinguished:—first, the pure ınd on portions of the clothes, like the girl's sash; second the pale pink which represents the unpainted woodwork of the window pane (really a much diluted mauve); third, the clear Venetian red that denotes the hard-wood slab of the tokamonou, or recess, and fourth, the dark claret red of the girl's apron. The yellow of the boy's underdress would become too staring for so complicated a scheme, were it not softened into a quiet orange by the superposed pattern-bands of the third red; as the purple of the girl's might be too harsh were it not meshed with the living silver of a willow branch laden with snow. We have to add the soft olive gray of the mats, and the pale purple gray of the silhouette of a pine-branch upon the paper panes; and with the black of the hair and of the lacquered wood-border for accent, the scheme is complete. Here Harunobu has done what is not usual with him, left a portion of the background white; but why? Because it represents the white Angeles of the translucent window! By isolating this ground tone of white upon a single object, has he not endowed it with a positive colour more subtle than any pigment could render? The very warmth of the paper suggests the muffled radiance of external sunlight, which effect is heightened by the vague shadow of the pine branch upon it. The soft white spaces of the flash, in contrast with the black of the hair, seem to stand out in light relief against the equally white window. Turn back to Plate V, and recall what was said about the management of the two tones, green and rose. Is not the promise here fulfilled on a scale of ten? The primary law is not only enforced, but utilized for masterly economy. Each colour and each value, however differentiated within, shall stand as a whole for one essential area of the composition. The ornaments that cut the parts shall modify into perfection the the colours of the grounds which they cut. Whatever man may afterward add to colour, he may not transcend these laws. You will find them in Giotto's frescos at Santa Croce; even when the Venetians have introduced oil and shadow, these principles remain the under-controlling law. And when the sixteenth century in Europe begins to violate this law, even the art of the island city begins to fall into muddy heaps.

Harunobu had a number of famous pupils;—Harashige, Harutsuuga, and Haruhiro, the last of whom, under his more familiar name, Korinai, continued the series of idyllic compositions for about ten years after Harunobu's death. His
cvlaur became richer and coarser, and his drawing more vigorous, as he fell into rivalry with the young Kiyonaga. He may be called the greatest designer of *ukiyo-e*, the long, narrow printed pictures that were hung or pasted against the pillars of houses.

To see the ground that in eight short years was traversed by Harunobu, it is enough to compare Plates VI and VIII. But it should not be forgotten that Plate VII, though a painting, just stands in an intermediate position, a golden link in the chain. Surely the grounds thus gained will not be lost; and Harunobu can not long stand alone in utilizing the new discovery. How far-reaching and revolutionary this change really was may now be discerned by another interesting fact. Before 1765 Ukio-ye was divided into two camps, the painters and the printers. Shunsō, the pupil of Shunsui, was a moulder of the former; Harunobu, the pupil of Shigemasa, a moulder of the latter. In the overturning, a queer thing happens—the traditions of the long estranged schools exactly change places. We have seen Harunobu virtually becoming a painter of Shunsui girls in the form of prints. In the new excitement Kiyotisui was eclipsed; and the long line of actor prints threatened to come to a violent end. The favourites of a year before were despised and forgotten. This hiatus in actor designing lasted for a year or two, but then the returning pressure of perennial interest in the theatre naturally began to refill the vacuum. There could be so question of a revival of the worn-out Kiyotisui; the problem must, in any case, be a new one, namely how to take up actor designing from a fresh standpoint, and enrich it with the full scheme of Harunobu’s colouring. Harunobu himself scornfully refused to do this. The other young seions of the Masanobu school, Toyoharu and Shigemasa, followed him in this refusal. The public had condemned the Teri. In this emergency, who in the world should come forward but that very Katsukawa Shunsō, the pupil of Shunsui, who had been rigorously trained to paint only refined subjects, such as young girls, and to cach the theatre? He virtually declared to the public, “I announce myself a successor to the Teri school, and I will give you actor prints with all the colour blocks you want.” This movement began as early as 1766, and ran parallel to Harunobu and his successors, for twenty years after Harunobu’s death. It is one of Ukiyo-e’s most prolific schools; and, though largely ignored by collectors, contains some of the greatest colour triumphs of the greatest period.

For there was not, between the quinary exchanged movements of Harunobu and Shunsō, anything like the separation that had existed between the
Miyagawa and the Torii. Both were using the same multiple colour block series of prints. Shunsho at first carefully followed, year by year, Harunobu's experiments in colouring. It was rather in the violence of dramatic gestures and in the large striking patterns of theatrical costumes that he managed to make original use of the same materials. Moreover, as we shall see, though Harunobu never again deigned to represent actors, yet Shunsho often invaded Harunobu's field of domestic scenes and book illustration. He trained a large number of famous pupils, all bearing the family name of Katsukawa and the first character *Shun* in their professional names; pupils who, in the years following Harunobu's death, became a powerful creative force in the Ukiyo-ye world. Among the greatest of these are Buncho and Shunsho; and the young genius, long afterward known as Hokusai and now only in his teens, working in this second actor school under the name of Shunro.

It would seem that the Buncho, just mentioned, is an exception from the law of the *Shun* name. A more careful classification would perhaps place him as a second enterer of the actor field, a rival of Shunsho, rather than a pupil. He is indeed very original both in design and colour feeling; but in method and subject he seems to follow almost every change in Shunsho's mood. For general purposes we may class him with Shunsho's early followers; though a more detailed study would demonstrate differences in his rivalry, such as Masanobu's in rivalling his friend Kiyomitsu. For Plate IX. I have chosen an actor print of Buncho, rather than one by Shunsho. It is of about the date 1772, the probable year of Harunobu's death. To estimate its value we should compare it on the one side with our last actor print by Kiyomitsu, Plate VI; and on the other with Harunobu, Plate VIII. In drawing and pose it would have been unwise to effect too radical a change from the Torii type. The theatre had not changed, and the same Ichikawa Danjuro graced it with the same roles. Moreover the Torii still held ascendancy in the playhouse itself, designing all the hand-bills, advertising sheets, and the great flaring posters that decked the facade during a performance. Thus it fell out that, in the male parts especially, popular associations were not violently broken, and the aesthetic change rather conceived the pictorial form of the colour printing. In the female parts, however, a more decided change of drawing was effected, the rapidly changing female coiffure of the 1770's being as accurately reproduced as in the design of girls by Harunobu and Korinsei. What is striking and original in the colour of Buncho is here made apparent.

Let us touch, now, upon the other side of Shunsho's work. Here he becomes notable as the designer of many of the coloured book-illustrations from
1766 to 1790. We have reproduced in Plate X a double page design from the most beautiful of all his books, the Seiro Bijin Awase Sugata Kagami in three volumes, worked out in collaboration with Kitao Shigemasa in the year 1775. This was by far the most beautiful and expensive block coloured book that had yet been issued; and it undertook to present, in comparative groups, the leading beauties of all the great houses of the fashionable demi-monde in Tokio. No such elaborate attempt had been made since the days of Moronobu’s paintings. It took very much the same kind of place in the popular fancy that photographs of famous geisha do to-day; for, take it all in all, the under-Xen is proud of its betaines, at that time, with few exceptions, the most highly educated women of the day. It is not difficult in this book, to distinguish the plates of Shunsho from those of Shigemasa. This is an especially attractive one in composition. Three little girls of the house called “Maruya,” have stepped out on the verandah this winter morning. Kadmamano, muffled to her throat, wears her purple sleeves about the shoulder of Omamori, whose hands, like those of Kadamaano, are well covered in the long flowing sleeves. Both are watching Toyotaro who stoops to lift, by the in-frozen wooden dipper, a sheet of ice from the stone water-basin. Never before has Ukiyo-ye known such drawing and colouring of plant life as may be seen in the sumire shrub that grows beside the stone, and in the bamboo chump that springs above it. All the grace of line that Shunsho could ever have learned from Shunsui (see Plate VII) is utilized in this idyllic composition. There is not much in the bare incident; but we feel a contemplative, relaxed grace in the little willowy figures that somehow seems to harmonize with the very drop of the bamboo, into that peculiar mood which only Japan can give—that is the identity of human life and its sweetness with the earth, the air, and all the sisterhood of plant growth. Surely does it seem possible that these fair children can be part of that life of dellament which the Buddhists call ‘the bitter world’? Contrast them with later portraits of courtesans, Kunisada’s, or even the Utamaro figure of Plate XV; and mark here the utter absence of all decadent vulgarity. This is almost as innocent as a Harunobu; and the crown of tortoise-shell hairpins, ignoble halo of their profession, how small, graceful, and inconspicuous they are here drawn! In the tones of background accessories we notice a tendency to return to grays. In his later days, from 1780 to 1790, Shunsho devoted himself largely to painting.

But we must press forward more rapidly. I have spoken of Shigemasa as Shunsho’s collaborator. He becomes in these great days the founder of a rival school, the Kitao; as does Toyoharu of another, the Utagawa. Toyoharu had been
the pupil of the old Toyoharu, even before 1765; and Shigemasa had been Harunobu's fellow-pupil of Shigenaga. These three with Shunsho can now be called the four heads of the new great school that monopolized work from 1765 to 1780. The Torii still existed as a fifth, but for the moment was under a sort of eclipse. I regret that I have no time to speak more in detail of the Kitao school. Shigemasa, who began to use Harunobu's new colour in 1765, soon surrounded himself with many pupils, of whom three, Kitao Masanobu, Kitao Masayoshi, and Shunman became conspicuous. Plate XI is selected from an illustrated book by Kitao Masanobu, of date 1790, which takes as subject the home life of famous belles. The colour, though more elaborate than that of Shunsho, is harsher. This book, Shin Bijin Awase, Shitsus Kagami, has now become one of the rarest treasures of collectors. Harunobu's careful background tones have been for the most part discarded, and attention centered upon the bright hues of the costumes. Some confusion arises from this excessive and bold richness; the lines kept by Harunobu are being broken. Note the gradual increase in the size of the hairpins.

This carries us on to the advent of a new master, who was destined to unite the qualities of all the four schools that had grown out of the experiments of Harunobu. This was Torii Kiyonaga, already spoken of as an adopted son of Kiyonobu. From 1765 to 1775 the Torii school in general lay under a heavy cloud, though the veteran Kiyonobu occasionally attempted to rival Harunobu, and with success. Kiyonaga remained an almost unknown figure until about 1775, when he came forward as a rival designer of the small, square genre pieces produced by Shigemasa, Toyoharu, Shunsho, and Harunobu's successor, Korinusa. In these the old peculiarities of the Torii actor school were utterly thrown away; yet the somewhat effeminate grace and delicate colour of Harunobu's style were not imitated. His idea seems to have been to design with beauty but also with boldness, and to use colour, not as an end, but as a means to heighten atmospheric effects. Kiyonaga was, above all things, a master of line, the greatest draughtsman of Ukiyo-ye, unless we except Hokusai. His brush had an almost super-human power and swing, as is shown in the richly modulated strokes of his rare paintings. To do justice to his line alone, unaffected by colour, one should see an outline proof from his first intaglio, or a page of his few but incomparable book-illustrations. In subject his range is omnivorous. When he designed to design actors, they seemed about to eat up those of Shunsho, as a cat eats a mouse. His series of Yezukuruwa
of Moronobu and Okumura Masanobu, seen through a kaleidoscope. Kiyonaga had to invent the true coloured landscape background. Harunobu indeed had attempted it, and Shuzan also; but they scarcely succeeded in freeing themselves from the rather limited suggestions of Shunsui and the Kano painters. For them grass was always thinly drawn stems over gray. For Kiyonaga it became broad lemon yellow masses. It is true that he finally rejected Harunobu's tint for a sky, leaving the warm paper to suggest a blurry background of mist. Perhaps he lost something by this. Perhaps he was right in feeling that the best range of Japanese printing pigments would pale too much before an eternal blue wall; and, after all, he uses his white grounds as if they were so much liquid sunlight. Breadth of effect is what he most has; and so he prints many portions of his landscapes directly from the colour-blocks, without preparation of ink outline.

Kiyonaga is an artist whose work needs to be studied in great detail, because it is seldom twice alike. From 1775 to 1792 his rich series of single sheets change perceptibly year by year. His early work is the finest for vigorous action; his middle term for a more than human dignity and grace; his third stage for naturalism in domestic scenes. We can feel that the acme of Ukiyo-ye is here reached. There are almost no more lessons for block printing to learn. The limited green and rose of Moronobu have expanded into a kaleidoscopic, yet equally orderly world; and a perfect balance has been reached between the "decorative" qualities of structural advance, and their application to problems of pictorial expression. Kiyonaga's feeling for line is as beautiful as his most original juxtapositions of colour. It is an art so equilibrated that any change will displease its elements. Moreover, it is something really too high and noble for the populace of Edo thoroughly to appreciate. In the whole movement, from Harunobu upward, there has been a large element of ideal quality, both the emotionally creative in form, and the idyllic in subject-matter. And this has come to a crisis in Kiyonaga, whose figures, at their best, demand to be placed side by side, for dignity and line wealth, with Greek vase painting. One instinctively wants to use the word "classic" in
speaking of them, as one does to a less extent of the best work of Okumura
Masanobu. But the Yedo populace, like every populace that is allowed to take
the bit in its teeth, had an element of the rash and insane in it, quite incom-
patible with classicism. The people were now absolutely cut off by caste law
from the samurai. It was not so much ideas as realities they wanted; a
panting thirst for knowledge—historical, personal, topographical, scientific—
possessed them. They would like to drink in the whole pictured 'floating-
world' as if it were but a single dish of sake. It is a wonderful testimony
to the heights of their culture that they tolerated an almost pure aesthetic
idealism so long. A national inherited taste had ruled the mob. But at any
moment it might become unmanageable, and evince a desire to rush down steep
places. For the moment, however, all was serene; and Kiyonaga ruled
undisputed emperor of Ukiyo-e. The pupils of all other schools left their
masters and joined him, all those of Shunsho, Toyohara, and Shigenaga. His
very type of face stamps the years from 1780 to 1790. It is a type rarely seen
among Japanese women, but when encountered forces from us such homage as
we might yield to the highest forms of Greek beauty.

The piece chosen to illustrate Kiyonaga in Plate XII, is a print of the
large, now square size, invented by him, and belongs to the year 1788. We
feel at once the out-door breadth and atmosphere. The colours are more
realistic than abstrusely beautiful; but they work into the sunny tone of the
whole. This is always conspicuous in his work, the impregnation with light,
though there be no formal cast shadows. Breadth is illustrated by the printing
of the lines with no outline. A similar breadth in the patterns gives a texture
to the dress-stuffs which the preceding plate by Kitao Masanobu does not possess.
Kiyonaga's beauty of drawing in arms and legs is peculiarly notable. It is
hard to say which is more flower-like, the kneeling girl or the iris which she
gathers.

The sum of Kiyonaga's followers makes up a contemporary wealth
almost equal to his own. From 1780 to 1790 it is everywhere a classic period
in print, a table-land of ideal excellencies. The Kiyonaga type of face
suppliants every other, except the vulgarities of the declining actor school of
Shunsho. From the academy of Toyohara the young Utamaro comes over to
pattern his style after that of Kiyonaga. Toyokuni, from the school of Toyohara,
does the same. Yebiho secures from the Kano ranks, Shunman from the
Kita instruction. And, most important of all, the actor-designing followers of
Shunsho throw a large part of their strength into genre pictures after the Kiyonaga manner. Among these is to be found the young Shunzo, afterward known as Hokotai. But the most successful were Shunsho and Shunzan. For ten years Shunsho becomes an alter ego for Kiyonaga; as Kiyomasu had been for Kiyonobu. Shunzan's work is rarer, but hardly less elegant. The present specimen, Plate XIII, is from a Shunzan series of prints of Yoshiwara belles. It is of about the date 1787, and may be compared with advantage to Kitao Masanobu's group in Plate XI. Here the sweetness of the Kiyonaga type of face has been caught to perfection; and in the free rhythm of the closely composed lines we note an advance upon the harder forms of its predecessor. In colour too, though it has not the charm of landscape setting, it just succeeds, through Kiyonaga's example, in doing what Kitao Masanobu did not, make a firm a synthesis of richly patterned costumes with a dozen basic tints, as Kiyonobu had done with two, forty years before. In the technique of printing, it about reaches the high-water mark.

But by the year 1790 this monotonous of excellence was evidently wearying a public which, since 1759, had become accustomed to the most rapid changes. If no one were left to vie with Kiyonaga in the upward path, then must supervene a change in the downward direction. Kiyonaga, for a year or more, attempted to meet the restless demand by more domestic scenes, and figures of less ideal proportions. But this was not congenial work; nor was it what the public wanted. The result was that, about 1792, he did what few artists have had the courage and self-mastery to do—in the prime of his life and talent he abdicated, rather than lower his standard. There is reason to believe that he lived far into the nineteenth century, and that he occasionally painted; but seldom again did he design a print, keeping himself in dignified retirement from the entire course of decay. What his heart-burnings were at this spectacle of degeneration, what his own noble and perhaps scornful thoughts, we shall never be told. The fact of his abdication speaks with sufficient eloquence. Shunsho either died or joined him in withdrawing; and the field, in this great transition period from 1790 to 1809, was practically left to the joint domination of those rising men; much as Alexander's empire was parcelled out among his generals. These three are Yeishi, Umanari, and Toyokuni. All three, during the 1790s, had been close followers of Kiyonaga. After the latter's retirement they gave themselves free rein to meet the new, popular demands. The dominance of the Kiyonaga type was so strong that the face did not, at first,
greatly change. But slowly, year by year, the proportions of head and figure elongated, entailing corresponding aesthetic changes in the style of drawing. Plate XIV, a group of girls by Yeishi, of about the date 1790, shows the coming changes, by hints so slight that they would be almost imperceptible were they not intensified in the following design by Utagaro. The faces are coarsening a little; the lines of the drapery fall in rapid, but relatively meaningless sweeps; and there is an evident desire for popularity in the new scale of colours, so utterly removed from naturalism, colours which, though quiet, are both unusual and attractive. The beauty of this purple, brown and yellow harmony makes it a favorite up to the year 1810.

The causes of this gradual change from Kiyonaga's style, a movement which, on the whole, we must consider the beginning of a decay, are not at this day easy to specify. That it is not an idiosyncrasy of some one powerful artist is shown by the fact that all contemporary print-designers share in it equally. It is a movement in fashions; and therefore surely must have corresponded to something in popular taste. In art it manifest itself in a predilection for the excessive, the bizarre, or the strikingly realistic. Why the taste for a distorted falseness in women's figures should have come at this date it is difficult to say. It was for tall women in 1772, it was for short in 1775, for tall in 1785, for short again in 1790; and such alternations in taste can be traced back even to Tosa times in the thirteenth century. But the passion for tallness that now became marked after 1792 went on to the point of an excess far surpassing all previous manifestations. Doubtless it was much like the cravat that seizes our Paris fashions in the West. But it was no accident. Back of all outward demonstration lay a restlessness of this people, who now, in their complete separation from the upper classes, felt that something more than the negativeness of a revolt was demanded, yet knew hardly where to look for a positive element to incorporate. The exposure of the Shogun's usurpation of the Mikado's power had been made. A new criticism was bringing out the strong idealisms of a past national literature, in cheap prints. The very plays had something seditions and threatening in their motives. The government, as was inevitable, now undertook censorship and repression: persecutions and death-sentences became common. The seeds of the final overthrow of feudalism in 1868 were being sown. The people, the despised but growing people, were daring to express themselves as a national force. The disquiet was but a slight foretaste of the recent chaos of the revolution of Meiji.
Perhaps the Ukiyo-ye artist who best threw into popular prints the echo of these grim and violent tendencies was Utamaro. To a lover of pure art the Kiyonaga-like Utamareis issued about 1787 are, without doubt, the most beautiful. But in the succeeding decade Utamaro found in the license of the hour an opportunity more suited to his wayward fancy. In the strange, long-headed, vulgar people of the world he now created, we have a forerunner, indeed a partial cause, of a certain decadent side in modern French art. Utamaro is the artist of the hour in Paris; for the last ten years his works have largely affected many of the new movements in oil-painting. For, like much of modern French art and literature, his art is an apotheosis of the natural and the ugly. It is a species of Zohism in prints. The same restless yearning of caged genius that lacks an ideal, is found in it. To be sure, in Japan, it had its side of strength also; for it represented a social struggle from below upward. But, in the violence of that struggle, art suffered. It would be vain to wish it otherwise. If art is but a sensitive barometer to measure popular pressures, each vital vision of passing truth is justified.

The print chosen to illustrate Utamaro in Plate XV. is also the reproduction of a belle, but now deliberately travestying an old Chinese ideal held sacred by the aristocrats. Sciob, Queen of the West, was the great Goddess of the Taoist religion, a gracious female ruler in the transcendent realms of the immortals. She was often pictured by the Kano artists in company with an attendant who offers to her the magic peach, a taste of which acts as the Elixir of Life in Western occult tradition. But here it is one of Utamaro's companions from the "flowery district" whom he would defy, with a fine irony, as a dispenser of immortality—a mocking answer to the hypocritical censors who had denounced these baroques of traits as "hell-women." The quarter had indeed, in some sense, become a refuge for radicals, who from its obscure labyrinths dared to issue seditions manifestos. There may thus be a hint that the name of these infamous but unselfish lovers of country might yet outline the triumphant tyranny of the castles.

But it is with the aesthetic qualities of this typical Utamaro print that we have most to do. The colour is not remarkable. It is in the extraordinary cleverness of drawing the distorted that we meet a force so striking and original that some persons have idealized it almost into a passion. This print is of about the date 1798; and the delirium of female tallness has not yet reached a culmination. But it is interesting to compare the face with those of Kiyonaga's
women in Plate XII; and note what strange lines have been forced, as if by a ductile process, from the simple naturalism of Kiyonaga’s drapery. The calligraphic pen-strokes, as in the thin sash and the lower part of the drapery, sweep across the page like zig-zag flashes of lightning. It is to be expected, perhaps, that the generation of Aubrey Beardsley should prefer these tricks to the sober grace of Harunobu or Kiyonaga. No new solutions of aesthetic problems are offered; though indeed we find a hinting newness of impression. It is the genius of the twilight. The very abandon in the costume of the masker intensifies the irony. A ready sign of the clever exaggeration appears in the length of the hairpin. If we go back to the Shunsbo group in Plate X, we shall note again the inconspicuousness of these head ornaments. In the Kito Masanobu lady, Plate XI, they are expanding, but are still slender. In the Yeishi promenaders, Plate XIV, they have acquired bulk; in this extravaganza of Utamaro’s fancy they pulse wide like the ribs of some enormous bat’s wing. But to achieve the total placing of this work, it will be sufficient to compare it with the Harunobu and the Kiyonaga. (Plates VIII. and XII.)

Utamaro did not create the decay, and Utamaro did not end it. His genius happened to be of a quality that was well-fitted to illustrate the first stages of degeneracy. In doing this he had wide range; and his paintings and book-illustrations are as striking as his single sheet prints. But already his power and fame were gradually becoming eclipsed by an humble and despised rival, a name which, in the opinion of many Westerners, crowns the achievement of Ukiyo-ye—that extraordinary being who in later life is known to us as Hokusai. Born at the period of beni-ye, his boyish eyes feasted on the bright novelties of Harunobu, but loved better the secret labyrinths under the theatrical stage, and the strange sights in the scenery-crowded passages between the green rooms. Shunsbo, the immortalizer of theatrical types, was the one whom he chose for master; and he began to design actor-prints professionally, under the name of Shunro, in all the naïve unconscionness of the 1770’s. A little later he swerves toward the Parranian heights of Kiyonaga; but finds breath difficult in that rarefied atmosphere. Early in the nineties he is plunging into the downward trail of Utamaro; and not until 1797 does his work begin to attract attention for its own intrinsic force. Suddenly, at about the age of thirty-eight, he bursts out along the whole line, painting immediately, designing prints, and dashing off books of coloured illustration. By 1802 he had practically cut himself loose from the gravitation
of Utamaro, and was soaring far away, a full-fledged and independent orb. It is not our purpose here to attempt even a brief analysis of his career, for this would require a space as large, at least, as this whole book. We can do no more than catch him at the point where he seems to develop his most characteristic strength, and fix the place of this in the chronological register of Ukiyo-ye influences.

What makes Hokusai so great at this period is that his genius exactly suited the degeneracy of contemporary morals and taste. Utamaro, with his traditions acquired from Kiyonaga, hardly succeeded, until just before his death, in making more than a travesty of his own early ideals. The same is true of his contemporaries Yeishi and Toyokuni. After 1805 or 1806 the total production of these schools lapsed into unrelieved ugliness and chaos. The type of such ugliness is shown in Plate XVI, which belongs to about the year 1811. In 1789 Toyokuni had been as dignified as Kiyonaga. Rushing down the gulf of frank vulgarity, with Utamaro at the prow, poling aside from the deadliest rocks, he now found himself in the whirlpool at the bottom. This plate, one of a continuous set of five, shows us a street scene in Yoshiwara. Immates and visitors are promenading on both sides of a cherry park that runs along the length of its broadest street. A fine attempt at colour gayety is made with the low tones already illustrated in Yeishi. (Plate XIII.) But the loss of all ideality in face, carriage, proportion, and costume marks the work of every artist of this day, with the one exception of Hokusai. That the populace had actually come to love and demand such hideous features is a sure sign that it was drowning itself in its own evil excesses. A forbidding decree of tyranny had cut it off from all that was good, and against this injustice it miserably declared half-open war. This was the cold plunge into realism from which, if at all, a strong national future must emerge. Hokusai alone among his contemporaries felt and depicted the strong and hopeful side that really underlay all the reeking unhealthiness.

I would seem to have broken my account of Hokusai by this intrusion of Toyokuni; but my doing so was intentional, for thus the courses of events really interfere and cut across each other. Toyokuni represents the downward movement that issued from Utamaro, and Hokusai an upward movement that issued from the same source. Also I was in doubt whether to number my Toyokuni plate before or after that of Hokusai; for, in reality, it may bear a date later by a year or two. Moreover its landscape background points the way to
later styles. But I felt that it was most important of all to illustrate the utter
degeneracy of Ukiyo-ye in 1819, against which Hokusai’s career is in
some sense a protest, or rather from which it is a clever exit. I do not
mean that Hokusai sets before himself any transcendental aim; he is a
son of the people and shares their tendencies. But having faith in them, he
sees more strength and beauty than they themselves see. Indeed the strength
of the young nineteenth century was toward fact and scientific investigation; not
now so much a learned criticism, as a rousing bath of the soul in the waters of
realism. Hence the beginning of those wonderful flower-books, and albums of
animals, and Hokusai’s own encyclopaedia in outline of the world’s external
phenomenon. Hence the love for travelling, and the thirst for topical detail
which now expanded into the rich series of illustrated guide-books. Information
about foreign countries, imported from Dutch sources, was also greedily devoured.
European prints were minutely copied, line for line, with the fine pointed brush;
and oil painting began to be practised by such artists as Shiha Kogan. But,
for the moment Toyokuni, in his old age, had plunged into the deadly vacuum
between two whirling movements, the vividness of a transition from passionate
subjectivity to an equally passionate objectivity. Hokusai is great because of
the coming movement; he already stands alone as a prophet crying in a
wilderness.

Plate XVII reproduces, in a wonderful triumph of modern block-printing, a most characteristic Hokusai painting of about the date 1870. This is
the first Ukiyo-ye painting we have reproduced since the Shunsui of 1761.
Plate VI). It may be well, as an exercise in criticism, to isolate and
compare directly Plates I, VII, and XVII. After that it can hardly be said,
as some of the French have said, that the Ukiyo-ye paintings are of trivial
importance and ugly, as compared with the prints. Then, for a moment, shut-
ting up this suggested chapter on painting before it is written, it may be well
directly to compare this Hokusai with the almost contemporary Toyokuni. (Plate
XVI). Contrast the health of face, pose, and lines of drapery in the one, with
the parallel imbecilities of the other. But it is over the comparison of this
Hokusai with the Utamaro print in Plate XV, that we must pause a little.
The Kiyomu influence that lingered in the latter is gone. A new type of
face greets us, angular and un-ideal, yet not distorted. The strokes of the brush,
while not less clever and vigorous than those of Utamaro, are far more expres-
sive of picturesque fact. They are new and thick, but sympathetic and melting,
and Hokusai has let the colours of their filled areas run over the primary black, then producing a new unity of texture. Nothing more superb than the crisp brocade of the scarlet sash could have been rendered by a Western master of oil. Contrast the quiet sweep of the ash-black dress about the feet, with the wriggling folds of Utamaro. But, now, discarding all comparison, the marvel of this work lies in its "breath." It is a painting, not a print; and yet the quality of vibrating flatness of which we spoke in an introductory paragraph forces its extreme limit of achievement back upon our attention. What we praised in the two-colour design of Kiyonobu, (Plate V.), in the ten colour mosaic of Harunobu, (Plate VIII.), and in the out-door atmosphere of Kiyonaga (Plate XI.), is now raised to its highest, in two figures unrehearsed by background, and in the voluntary restraint of a free painter's brush. The figures fairly swim in the atmosphere of the paper. This is a breath which the hand-coloured prints at first lost (see Plate IV.), and such prints as that of Kitao Masanobu, (Plate XI.), again lost in a multiplicity of colour-blocks. Even Shunsai, the artistic grandfather, so to speak, of Hokusai, does not quite reach it in his painting. Here it is shown in the absolute power of every tone to hold its firm place, no matter how differentiated. The green sash (sash) has a pattern of green and olive, and the red sash of orange and minute green touches which fire it with the glow of an unseen contrast. The black dress is shot with pearl, and the brown lining with ochre stars, and the pearl costume with a frosting of silver fronds. And how the gleaming rusty greys of the iron pots which the women bear hold their own against every value of the harmony!

Yet is, in our enthusiasm, we are tempted to place this technical triumph on the highest pinnacle of art, we may perhaps be sobered by a final comparison with the print of Kiyonaga (Plate XII.). It is with no less a master than Kiyonaga that Hokusai challenges a test. So judged, we must say of the Hokusai that, although more splendid, it is less sane and pure than the out of door idyl of the earlier master. It is a little off the normal line of advance. There is a bizarre element that it could hardly help catching from its environment. Kiyonaga's print is just the balance between the sweet unconsciousness of normal life, as shown in Harunobu, and the overpowering technique of breadth in this Hokusai. In Kiyonaga the atmosphere is so natural that we hardly realize it to be a marvellous problem solved. There is no call for exaggeration in the simple draperies that clothe those little young bodies. This is the classic, for which Hokusai is the consciously romantic. The latter is the Hugo, or the Dumas of his remote Asiatic Paris.
We must not attempt to follow the career of Hokusai further. Enough
to say that his triple series of paintings, prints, and
book-illustration, never broken
until his late death in 1849, are almost unrivalled in fullness. Enough to point
out that in the revival of earnestness, partly based on scientific study, among the
Yedo populace, which characterizes the years between 1820 and 1840 as a minor
renaissance of Ukiyo-ye, he remains always one of the great leaders. Perhaps he
was greatest of all as a prophet. It is necessary now for us to turn to a figure
who equally dominates this fast great movement, and whose importance has been,
until recently, ignored by Western critics. I refer to Kunisada, the greatest pupil
of Toyokuni, who, after his master’s death, sometimes assumed the name of Toyokuni
the Second. The fine specimen of his print designating reproduced in Plate XVIII,
will furnish sufficient text for what I have space here to say. It is of about the
date 1830. The subject represents two young ladies in a boat which drifts in a
pond of a daimio’s garden. That it is a renaissance may be seen in many ways.
Though the faces show no attempt to get back to the Kiyonaga type, they are at
least not so hopelessly vulgar as those of Toyokuni in Plate XVI. The subject is
healthier. It dares to deal with the life of aristocrats, even if distorted through the
lens of popular taste. It is as much as to say,—“We can take these people, too,
within our human ken, and admire, without envy, their elegance and freedom.”
The excessive richness of the costumes and patterns is characteristic of this stage
of Ukiyo-ye. Regarded as a constructive problem, these dresses covered with
delicate vines mirror the height which the embroiderer’s art has reached, in a
ripe mastery of colour arrangement. Kunisada depicts, with an ease that is very nearly
vulgar, a wealth of patterning which the supreme effort of Shunran (Plate XIII.)
painfully strove for in 1787.

But the real significance of this art would not be seen, did we not tell our-
selves that it is conspicuously a landscape art. This is the mark of the new ideal of
the new century. To be sure Kiyonaga had introduced the free out of door back-
ground, forty years before; but it had never developed into a motive of prime interest.
The men of 1820 in Japan, as in France, turned their thoughts outward from the
garbage of cities, upon the free loveliness of nature. It was a stage in the self-
regeneration of the people. Hokusai himself did much to foster it. Settan filled
his guide-books with its line rendering. Toyokuni had hinted of it in his elaborate
paintings and in his late prints, such as Plate XVI. But Kunisada, after 1825,
made it the feature of his advance. The myriad phases of water, and hill, and
foliage became clear and pure and organic, though used only as a background
against which the Ukiyo-ye group was balanced. In this respect it would be well to compare the Kuniyada work with that of Kiyonaga in Plate XII. Note, too, what a different arrangement of the hair dominates the fashion of the nineteenth century.

The leaders of this last healthy movement were three: Kuniyada, Hokusai, and Hiroshige. The qualities of Hokusai's later work are exhibited in Plate XIX, which reproduces a print by his greatest pupil, Hokkei, of about the date 1835. Here the landscape motive much more strongly dominates the composition. Note how the flatness of a few tints in soft natural tones is doing for landscape what Kiyonobu and Kiyomitsu did for figures in the beginning of colour-printing. Breadth is the supreme effect aimed at, and the figures are only incidents of the landscape.

But we hasten on to speak for a moment of the third great leader, whose work brings Ukiyo-ye down to modern days. Hiroshige had been a pupil of Toyokuni's brother, Toyohiro, who had made a few experiments in printing pure landscape. But it was Hiroshige who first, and indeed for the only time in the whole world's art, threw himself into the problem of printing in natural yet broad tones the total range of landscape impressions. With him, as here, the use of landscape as a mere background is discarded. The scenery itself becomes the picture. Nothing that Hokusai did in this line is quite so sane. One notable feature in this is that it goes back to Harnobu's idea of filling up the whole sheet, sky and all, with solid colour. In earlier schools, Japanese artists had painted landscape; but either thinly coloured, as in backgrounds of Torii Makimono, or frankly monochromatic, as in the Ashikaga work. At this very moment, too, pure naturalistic Japanese landscape was being painted at Kyoto by artists of the Shijo school, but its indications of colour were only the faintest hints. In Hiroshige's art alone do we see the thousand picturesque sites of Japan reduced to their simplest and truest constructive elements of mass and colour. How skies tint into the warmth of horizon mists, and thatched roofs are set in yellow facets against the olives of rich soil, and the orange fire of maples deepens the blue of marshy pools, and the gold of ripening rice-fields hugs the cool green groves of a middle distance—such marvels remain for the print reproduced in Plate XX to show us. It is a kind of upright design that Hiroshige produced in great numbers between 1840 and 1850, and is one from a famous series of views in the environs of Yedo. This particular view is well-known, and looks out eastward from the heights above the village of Oji toward Tsukuba-yama. The topographical fidelity to the spirit of each place in these prints is something more vivid even to-day than the
dlness of any modern photograph can compass. Such work lies at the very base of problems in landscape construction. Colour is no superficial embellishment, but the letters in which the primary conception is spelled. The example of this man is already revolutionizing Western practice. There is no leader who can create a perfect landscape in four flat colours but Hiroshige.

Whatever may be the sentiments of my readers, I, for my own part, regret that my examples have come to an end, and I must, perforce, do the same. It is a galloping rate, I must confess, at which I have ridden over three hundred years, from Matahei to Hiroshige. But, perhaps, after all, there may have been some unique gain in thus getting a first picture of Ukiyo-ye as a whole, as if it were a bird's eye view, caught in the connected moments of a single flight. Of the subsequent stages of decay this is not the place to treat. It was only while the Yedo populace still existed that Ukiyo-ye could be a living art. Japan had to sacrifice it in broadening into nationality and cosmopolitanism. I believe that the future of Japanese art will be bright. What Western educators are doing in taking lessons from its past, it, if it choose, can do still better. But it will not be the same art—it will be a sixth period to add to the five already gone. I hope I have made it clear why, in the fifth, Ukiyo-ye has been a unique force both for Japan and for the world. Whatever may come hereafter, the fame and charm of these humble designers can never fade. Moronobu, and Harunobu, and Kiyonaga, and Hokusai will remain distinguished leaders along the centuries, even as Giotto, and Masaccio and Bellini forever hold their place in the sparse constellations of the immortals.

THE END.
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