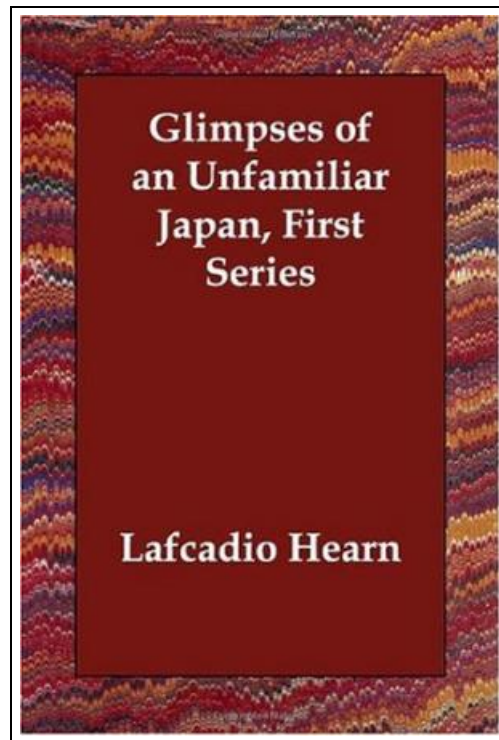


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In the Introduction to his charming *Tales of Old Japan*, Mr. Mitford wrote in 1871: The books which have been written of late years about Japan have either been compiled from official records, or have contained the sketchy impressions of passing travellers. Of the inner life of the Japanese the world at large knows but little: their religion, their superstitions, their ways of thought, the hidden springs by which they move--all these are as yet mysteries. This invisible life referred to by Mr. Mitford is the Unfamiliar Japan of which I have been able to obtain a few glimpses. The reader may, perhaps, be disappointed by their rarity; for a residence of little more than four years among the people--even by one who tries to adopt their habits and customs--scarcely suffices to enable the foreigner to begin to feel at home in this world of strangeness. None can feel more than the author himself how little has been accomplished in these volumes, and how much remains to do. The popular religious ideas--especially the ideas derived from Buddhism--and the curious superstitions touched upon in these sketches are little shared by the educated classes of New Japan. Except as regards his characteristic indifference toward abstract ideas in general and metaphysical speculation in particular, the Occidentalised Japanese of to-day stands almost on the intellectual plane of the cultivated Parisian or Bostonian. But he...


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