HERE is one place in Tokyo, not mentioned in the guide book, which you will be fortunate if you have a chance to see, and that is the home of Helen Hyde, the San Francisco artist whose woodcuts and colored etchings have brought her renown in many countries. It is in a district known as Akasaka, where, aside from a few foreign embassies, only Japanese architecture exists and where Japanese life is practically unchanged.

Unless you are familiar with the narrow little erratic streets of Japan, which run in all directions and at all angles, you may think your jinrikisha man is taking you down some private lane to Number Eight Hikawa cho. Over the thick green hedge on either side peer curious trees and tile roofs with never a chimney to break the ripple of their curves. You are wishing you might see all the fascinating things that must be hidden by the hedge when suddenly your man-horse drops the shafts to the ground in front of a high wooden gate with hinges and pillar tops of green copper.

Then you realize the advantages of the jinrikisha, or *kuruma* as the Japanese call it, when your horse may be also the driver, as well as the groom, and even your guide. He opens the gate and in the interval of being rolled in over a fine pebbly walk, you get again the lane-like effect. A low moss covered stone wall on either side, with ferns in every crevice, is topped by a narrow bank in which more ferns cluster around the base of trees. If it is early spring, the glossy leaved camellia is starred with red blossoms; if it is April, the cherry trees are heavy with pink bloom.

At the end of the short lane, you perceive a stone *torii*, or gate, and its duplicate in wood just beyond. Moreover there are carved stone foxes on either side, and the stone cistern in which worshippers wash their hands before approaching the shrine. And there, at the end, is the shrine itself; a small wooden building with light bars in the door through which you see the tiny altar. If you have been visiting the temples of Japan, you recognize all these things as belonging thereto, even the *shimenawa*, or rope of rice straw which encircles the huge sacred *hinoki* tree—all objects of veneration. You wonder at the presence of these things until it is explained that they were the pioneer possessors of the land. The shrine itself is known to be over one hundred and eighty years old and the trees were even then middle aged. No Shinto worshipper now clangs the bell to
VIEW OF HELEN HYDE'S HOUSE IN THE DISTRICT KNOWN AS AKASAKA IN TOKYO, JAPAN.

A CORNER OF THE STUDIO, LOOKING OUT INTO JAPANESE GARDEN.
IN THE DINING ROOM YOU NOTICE THE INVASION OF WESTERN CONVENIENCES.

THE BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY OF THIS ROOM IS CONSPICUOUS BOTH IN WALL TREATMENT AND FURNITURE.
get the attention of the presiding spirit whose abode the occupant of the land is bound to protect and repair.

Turning from the shrine you observe the house which Miss Hyde designed, hidden until now by the garden fence of bamboo. It is a two-story structure of wood in its natural color, gently mellowed by time and weather, with gray tile roof broken into projecting curves. There seems to be no door; only light wooden bars like a bird cage. You expect the kurumaya to clap his hands in native fashion, but he calmly pushes a button and you recognize the invasion of foreign conveniences. Almost immediately the bars part and slide either side of what looks like a Japanese doll. A toy it might be, bowing so low before you, but in reality it is Toyo, the little maid who asks you in a soft voice to "honorably entering deign."

In the vestibule you leave your rubbers, if it has been raining, which it frequently does in Japan. If your shoes are quite clean, you may leave them on and enter the reception hall, for Miss Hyde's tatami, or fine straw mats, are covered with rugs. The first object you face as you enter is a large flower arrangement of pine, the favorite emblem of long life. Over it hangs a curious and fascinating piece of wood done into lace patterns by boring insects, forming a background for large ideographs in greenish bronze; a house blessing it may be, or a welcome sign to the guest. There is only time to observe a table and chair carved in lotus designs before you are ushered into the drawing room.

FEW foreigners are able to introduce customary comforts without destroying the simplicity of Japanese house interiors. But Miss Hyde seems to have solved this problem. Here are chairs, carved, wicker and lacquer, in artistic shapes,—some of them designed by Miss Hyde,—and a carved table, all of Japanese workmanship. But they keep their proper places and do not disturb the eye, which rests on the plain, brown, pictureless wall and low gray-brown ceiling of natural wood.

There are two tokonoma, or honorable recesses. In one stands an old Korean cabinet inlaid with mother of pearl. It holds, as you may have a chance to learn, a choice collection of old brocades, embroideries and dyed stuffs in kimonos, priest's robes and obi. With her models arrayed in these costumes, many of them old and rarely beautiful, Miss Hyde can reproduce in her prints types long since passed away.

In the other recess may be a flower arrangement of cherry, or whatever flower is then in season. It is very simple and looks easy to do, but Hondo San makes it her life work and her pupils find it
no easy task to please her. Each week she arrives, followed by a
coolie carrying a large bundle of budding branches and flowers from
which she selects and teaches her pupils to make arrangements for
all the house. Over the flowers hangs the one picture, a painting
mounted in the form of a hanging scroll and called a *kakemono*.

That only candle light is used in the room is indicated by the
four tall brass *andon*, or floor lanterns in lotus designs, with globes
of white silk. There is a large brass *hibachi*, or fire box, on the floor
to hold coal for the open grate, an item that does not belong to Japan’s
list of comforts. On one side of the room runs an outer gallery
enclosed with glass shutters. When the paper *shoji* and the outer
wooden *amado* are all pushed aside, the room opens like a porch
on a garden.

The things that can grow in the limited space of a Japanese gar-
den are unbelievable. There is a clump of bamboo; a persimmon
tree, magnolia, camellias, cherries, plums and fine-leaved red maple.
Under these grow bushes of azalea, the *nanten* with its scarlet berries
and the *yamabuki* with its brilliant yellow flowers. As if this were
not enough, on a bench of gnarled wood, in Japanese pots of old
blue and gray, some of the large trees are repeated in miniature—
pines, firs, and an *icho* tree which look centuries old though only a
foot or two high. Perhaps the most treasured spot in the garden is
a bed of cowslips which made a long journey from a certain home
bed in California. There are other reminders of home in the climb-
ing roses and wistaria which trail over a bamboo trellis.

In the dining room there is a departure again from Japanese
ideas in the round table, the black lacquered chairs and the green
rug with bamboo designs in black. No light is softer or more agree-
able to the eye than that which comes through the thin Japanese
paper of the *shoji*. When this falls on a mellow buff wall, nearly
the color of the natural pine ceiling, the effect is restful indeed. The
green of the rug is repeated in the four *fusuma*, or sliding doors, with
their designs of bamboo on a gold background. The scheme ap-
ppears again in window curtains, dyed after Miss Hyde’s design,
which includes her monogram. This is also dyed in the garments
of her servants, appears in gold on her *kuruma* and is used in deco-
rative effects throughout the house.

The most attractive thing about the bedrooms, which are fur-
nished as is the rest of the house, with straw mats, bamboo and
wicker furniture, are the *fusuma*. Over each ebony framed panel
of cream-colored Japanese paper riot the children of Miss Hyde’s
prints. She has put them there with all the dash and freedom of
the old Kano school of painters, which excelled in brush work.
BUT the most interesting room in this charming house is the studio upstairs, where you will no doubt be served with honorable tea by the small maid. Here you will immediately feel the atmosphere of things achieved. Simplicity is there because there is no superfluous or useless thing. The press is, of course, what she uses for printing her etchings; the brushes, palette and paints are for oil and water colors; the pile of wooden boards are the carved blocks from which her woodcuts are printed. Indeed, you may be so fortunate as to arrive when Maratta San, her Japanese printer, is at work, seated on the floor in native fashion with cups of coloring matter, many brushes, and stacks of paper around him. Here he prints under Miss Hyde’s supervision until an edition is completed.

Unlike most studios, the brown walls have no pictures; only the kakemono in the tokonoma behind the flower arrangement. Two sides of the room let in much of the outdoors through the shutters, which have small panes of glass instead of paper. A little balcony, plant laden, looks over a tiled roof into the group of trees containing the shrine. You will wonder which is more charming: the house itself, or its outlook on all four sides into trees and gardens.

One beauty of a Japanese house is its adaptability to temperature. When the three sets of shutters are closed, the winds may howl and seek in vain for entrance. The house is solidly shut with deaf ears and closed eyes to outside elements. But on balmy days, when our brick and mortar shells shut out the sunshine, this Japanese house may be opened to its very heart with only a tile roof on its head.

So Miss Hyde has judiciously blended the aesthetic beauties of Japanese architecture with the comforts and conveniences we have grown to regard as necessary. Amid such ideal surroundings she studies the people and sends them forth to many countries as prints and pictures to carry a message of the beauty of Japan.