

FOREWORD

Lafcadio Hearn was very fond of insects. Naturally he wrote much about them; there are, I believe, few writers either in the East or in the West who wrote so much and so beautifully about insects as he.

This is a collection of all the essays, stories and lectures concerning insects among his works. Apart from his fluent and elegant style, I am sure, the reader will find the thought of his articles very interesting and will be astonished to know how he made the best use in his works of Japanese poems, many of which are perhaps unfamiliar even to the Japanese reader.

For the benefit of English students I have put literal translations on the pages opposite the original, together with some annotations. But I must ask the Japanese reader to study the original with much care and to try to appreciate the charms of Hearn's English for himself.

I must also say in justice to Hearn that, as it was I who furnished him with the materials for nearly all the articles contained in this book, I am responsible for the mistakes, if there be any, in the descriptions of Japanese insects and in the quotations from poems or other records relating to insects.

The contents of this book are not arranged chronologically but according to the seasons in which the insects treated appear

“ Butterflies,” “ Mosquitoes,” and “ Ants ” are from “ Kwaidan ” (1904); “ Story of a Fly ” and “ Fireflies ” from “ Kottō (1902); ” “ Dragon-flies ” from “ A Japanese Miscellany ” (1901); “ Semi ” from “ Shadowings ” (1900); “ Insect-Musicians ” from “ Exotics and Retrospectives ” (1898); “ Kusa-hibari ” from “ Kottō ”; and “ Some Poems about Insects ” from “ Interpretations of Literature ” (1915). The last named work is, by the bye, one of the books which Prof. J. Erskine edited after Hearn’s death, by synthesizing the note-book records of Hearn’s lectures in the Tōkyō Imperial University taken by certain classmates of mine and myself.

MASANOBU ŌTANI,

Kanazawa, Japan, November, 1920.