

THE MAGIC MIRRORS OF JAPAN.

BY JOS. M. WADE.

SOMETIME ago I read in the *Weekly Times* of Tokyo, Japan, about an old steel mirror that, when held to a strong light, was said to reflect the image of Buddha. This was attributed by the editor to superstition, if I am not mistaken. This past week, an old steel Japanese mirror has come into my possession, which, when held to a strong light, distinctly reflects the image of a child Buddha, full length with arms extended upward over the head. There is no mistaking this, for I am neither sentimental nor superstitious. This I think has been produced by some old-time Japanese artist. I think that steel has been inlaid into steel after the manner of damascene work, then the whole face of the mirror polished, the grain of the damascene work being different from the body of the steel mirror, reflects the figure as inlaid, while the mirror shows only a clear polished steel surface. The object of this is quite clear to me. When such a mirror was shown to the people, it would be to them a mystery, and could be palmed off as a "miracle," and would draw them closer to Buddhism. Of course there is no such thing as a "miracle." To him who has attained Buddhahood all things are clear. What ignorant people do not understand, designing men palm off as a miracle, and draw people closer to their form of "belief."

Since writing the above I have consulted Mr. S. Nomura, from whom I got the mirror. Mr. Nomura is president of Benten & Co., of Kyoto, and informs me that he secured six mirrors in exchange for embroideries from the priest or priests of one of the temples in Kyoto. They were very old and very dirty. The priests in charge knew nothing of these mirrors, except that they were old mirrors brought to the temple before their time. Mr. Nomura supposed them to be old common steel mirrors, and gave them to one of his

servants to polish with white powder and silk cloth. As he polished each one he laid it on the floor face up. When the sun struck the mirror, the man noticed in the reflexion on the ceiling the form of a child Buddha, and that was how the discovery was made. I have all the six mirrors in my possession, and have tested each one, and found that each reflects a child Buddha, but not always the same, and some of the mirrors cast a different reflexion from others. These mirrors are round, have loops to hang them up, and on the back are Buddhist characters.