AROUND THE INLAND SEA

IT'S very still, under the awnings. . . Not hot, just pleasantly, drowsily, soakingly warm, with a breeze so cool and light and fitful that it seems like something alive, touching you . . . . hesitating . . . . touching again.

Out beyond the rail, the sea is hazy azure with the sun on it, smooth as a cat. You'd go to sleep, there in the faint sunlight, if it weren't for the islands. More islands than ever were in any sea before; and more kinds of islands—little round sugar-leaf islands as bright and perfect as so many toys planted on the shimmering water; little pointed islands like a kobold's cap; little flat-topped islands like rock tables—every sort of island there is, except the kind you saw the moment before. Each swings into view over the other's shoulder, sandy-tan or fir-green, marked with tiny delicately traced veins where the water pours down in the rainy season. And each slips astern, in the dripping golden sunlight, silent as an island in a dream. . .

There's a toy boat swinging in the space between two islands—a space that grows immense by contrast with the tiny perfect thing, sandalwood and white against its infinite sunny background. It has a little roof of yellow straw over a little brown fisherman who rows with one oar.

There are secluded upland valleys on some of the islands, too, fairy valleys all green and warm and still, and sudden incredible little villages sitting in folds of the hills, with their elvish chins on their hands, and their toes in the bright

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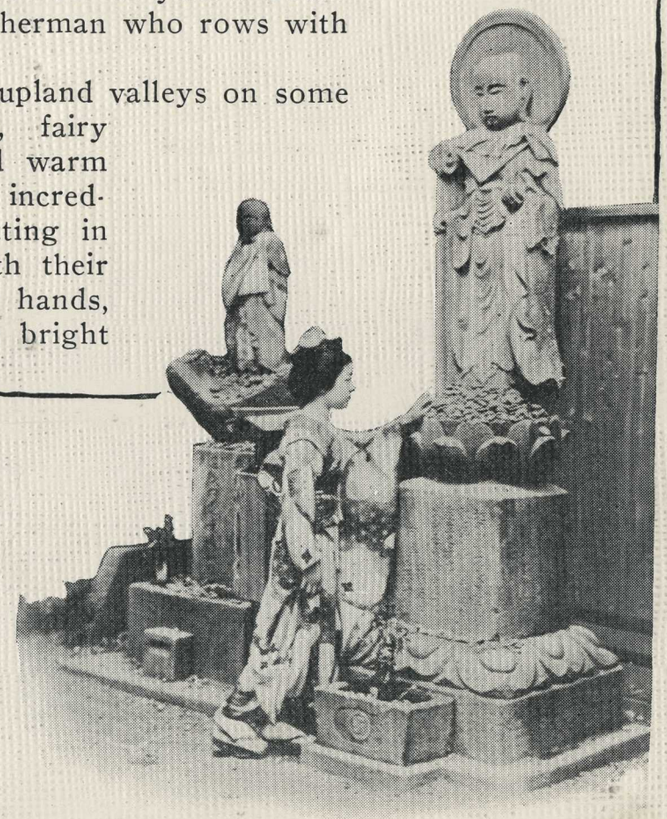


Jizo is the children's god. He helps them to build the strange little towers of stones that are required of them after death—towers that the evil spirits throw down. Grown people of compassionate hearts bring pebbles to Jizo, and, if a child is sick, one adds a bib to the god's already overloaded neck in the hope that he will remember its former wearer.

water. There are efficient little lighthouses once in a while, just to be practical, Noah's Ark lighthouses in red and black, to warn away the square, fluted, paper-colored sails of a little fleet of motionless junks.

And then comes a strait so narrow that you hold your breath for fear the ship is going to rub off some of the scenery that slides by. But before your heart can skip a beat, you're out into blue water, facing a vista where you can look in, and in, to still more islands, still more junks, and still more winding sea—pale, shallow-watered sea—faint, pearly-misted islands—mile after mile, hour after hour—such a blue-glorious day! . . . .

The steward didn't mean to wake you up. But you're glad he did. You wouldn't have believed it, after such a breakfast, but you want that broth amazingly, and those crisp salty crackers. The ship has done all the work, of course. But you're hungrier than you knew how to be, two weeks ago!

Whether you're coming from China, or from Home, you love this Inland Sea with its drifts of brown seaweed and its wake of bright foam, and you're glad the great Sea-Planner hollowed out Japan's main island and then fitted in Shikoku and Kyushu at the bottom—but didn't fit them quite—to leave this bit of tame pretty ocean that no one could help growing fond of, and wanting to paddle around—lazily—with a launch of one's own.

Kobe is an excellent city to choose as headquarters for seeing not only the Inland Sea itself but all that ancient Japanese civilization that practically began at Nara, went on at Kyoto, and, even now, looks upon Tokyo as an upstart—royal, to be sure, but slightly *nouveau riche*.

Few Japanese ports are so well-equipped to make the traveller comfortable, for though Kobe isn't big, being just the fifth city in the country, it has a large and progressive foreign colony, so that whether one stays at a hotel, or is fortunate enough to know someone who lives on that lovely wooded ridge behind the city, one is sure of everything but being bored. There are golf clubs, bathing beaches, foreign stores, *thé dansants,* bridge parties, even a walking club—and all this mixed up with life as it might be lived on a paper fan!

The Japanese boy goes on his bicycle to school—but he wears a little white kimono-thing with big blue spots. His brother works in a telegraph office, carries an Ingersoll watch—but visits his grandfather in Gifu who earns his living by fishing with twelve cormorants who swallow the fish down to their iron neck-rings, when grandfather interferes. The Japanese girl studies English, plays the piano, has been known to bob her hair—but her mother takes her little paper lantern in hand and climbs at night to the Maya-San Temple and worships the mother of Buddha, all carved in ancient wood—one of three hundred thousand pilgrims who keep to the ancient ways. And those who see the long pearl-beaded line of them moving up the mountain side at

festival time through the scented dark will never forget the sight of these little shaken earth-stars who seek the starry sky.

But novel as the salad of life in Kobe is, those who have come to see Japan must soon start out for Kyoto,—just a step away, as we count distances—for more than a thousand years the capital, still the centre of all the country's art, a city wholly Japanese that lies in a great green cup in the hills, with temples and pagodas set like glittering little *objets d'art* wherever the scene demands an accent.

The river that flows through the center of it is crossed and recrossed with bridges, and every bridge has its story, and every bridge has its song as the hundreds and hundreds of pairs of wooden *geta* clatter across it, hour after hour—no two making precisely the same cadence, we're solemnly assured. The women who have long strips of cloth fresh-dyed, shake them out in the water—great Mardi Gras ribbons of color. And the men who have vegetables to sell wash them there, too, and pile them, dripping, into wicker baskets. There are tea houses on the river banks, little delicate things of perfect satiny wood and paper windows, within which there is endless hurrying of black-eyed *nesans* across beautifully clean mattings, waiting on the lords of creation who wish to eat, or drink tea, or smoke. There is the sound of the samisen, too, for the geishas of Kyoto are the

The umbrellas are one of the prettiest things about Japan. When it rains, the roads are full of them, great bobbing bits of color that are whirled over till they stand vertical, edge to the ground, protecting their owner's clothes when our motor splashes by. But even if the raindrops fall on the baby's face in the process, he won't cry in all his red and blue gorgeousness, for babies seldom do in Japan.

most perfect in the Empire. Is there not a geisha school in the city (which Tokyo can't boast), and are not the loveliest silks in the world woven here for such distinguished wearing, and do not the poets sing here in greater numbers than anywhere else?

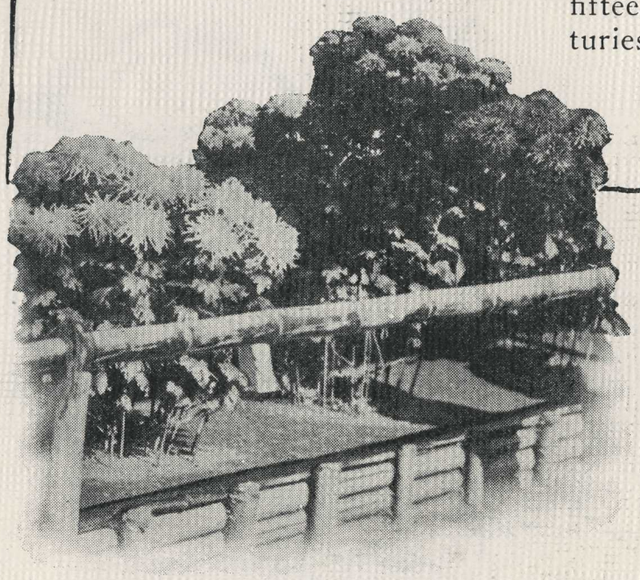
There is always a festival going on. Some of them, like those in Tokyo, have to do with flowers. But more of them have to do with history, and who can describe the knights in armor that Charlemagne never knew, the floats and boats New Orleans wouldn't recognize, the procession of lovely ladies who wouldn't even be named in Boston, the Cherry Dance of the geishas, the Dance of the Festival of the Dead, the things they do at the Fox Temple, the Festival of Armor and Flags for boys, the Festival of Dolls for girls? Some of these are also celebrated elsewhere, of course. But in Kyoto the people have a genius for festivals, and out come thousands of lanterns on the slightest provocation, and the whole population goes clattering and smiling through the streets to visit some shrine on a hillside—to sit and drink tea at tiny tables in the bed of the sum-

The silks of Japan are among the loveliest in the world. They all start with little cocoons like those the smiling young peasant holds in her basket. The textile genius of the race doesn't confine itself to silk, however, for the gay printed cottons that the visitor finds in the native shops make not only kimonos for the Japanese farmer's daughter, but quaint country dresses for Americans who buy them.

mer-dried river, with bamboo bridges over the pools that remain—to go to Uji and wait in a boat all night to watch the brilliant Battle of the Fireflies who are known to be the ghosts of warriors, dead and gone eight hundred years. . . (But before he leaves for *this* festival, the good Japanese unfastens the doors where his own little fireflies glimmer in their tiny bamboo cage, lest they, too, should chance to be warriors, called to fight with the rest.)

As a background for all this ribbon of color that runs through the ancient capital, there are the shops. Kyoto makes the loveliest fans in all Japan, the quaintest dolls, the most marvellous silks and brocades, the most beautiful china and pottery. . . Think of the memories that will tumble out of your trunk along with them, and come to live in your good steamheated house at home, that never heard the sound of a samisen—memories of lantern-shaken nights, and flower-clouded afternoons, and little brown shopmen that bowed, and smiled, and handled beautiful things as they ought to be handled, but seldom are in the West.

If you've learned to love Japanese temples for the line and mass and color of them, for the blossom-and-jewel-toned robes of the priests, for the gaily-patterned crowds that drift in and out of them, and the treasured paintings on their walls—then you're never going to tire of Kyoto, where even the Awati Palace where the Emperors lived so long looks like a temple. But the loveliest thing about the Palace is its garden, laid out by two marvellous old artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. To walk in it is like walking through the frame of a picture and moving around



From the cherry blossoms of April to the chrysanthemums of November, Japan is a land of flowers—even the late autumn has its colored leaves and the winter its starry snowflakes, worshipped by poets in strange little verses. But the women of Japan in their printed robes are the prettiest flowers of all—the ladies rather soberly lovely; the geishas, gay as a tinkle of bells.

inside!—little pools, little bridges, little winding paths that somehow twist a small plot into a magic forest, little mountains and a little teahouse, and a really lovely far-from-little view, make you quite ready, when you come out, to go down the street to the little shop where they sell all sorts of things to make a garden—except the Japanese art-soul that knows how to use them!

It's quite hopeless to try to make pictures of all those temples. Each one has art treasures, or history, or a garden, to distinguish it above the rest. There is the painting of the sparrow that was done with such lifelikeness that the sparrow flew away, and you may see where he came out of; and the painting of the cat so real that all other cats spit when they see it. There is the little waterfall under which one must stand to pray—though it is not a shrine favored by foreigners, as all one's clothes must come off first, and the water is cold. There is the statue of Binzuri whose face has been so rubbed by those who want to get well, that the thoughtful authorities have provided him with a new set of features. There are countless statues of Jizo, the children's god, to whom the mothers bring baby-bibs, and even tie them around his neck to be sure the accompanying requests don't slip his memory. There is the shrine of Inari—around which centres all that strange cult of the fox that has so puzzled Westerners—to which men come to pray, and listen, for business tips! There is the Mikado's Palace and the Nijo Castle where the Tokugawa shoguns lived, who

were the real rulers of the land from the sixteenth century down almost to our own day, although they never usurped the emperor's name along with his powers.

Perhaps the most beautiful temple of all is the Nishi Hongwanji—but while we can talk of the polished "nightingale floors" whose boards are so loosely laid that they slip on each other and sing plaintively as we walk over them—or of the "Sunrise-till-Dark Gate" that a man may look at all day long and not grow weary—while we may try to put the Peacock Room into little black and white words, or the Stork Room, or the Chrysanthemum room—we know perfectly well that it can't be done. For who has ever described a single little Hokusai print picked up in a Tokyo shop? How then describe the painted panels, and gold-backed screens, and sliding doors of old and lovely cedar wood, each touched by some master hand that made tradition, and upset whole schools of art, while America was still fighting the Indians!

There are all sorts of trips to be made to places near Kyoto, but that to Lake Biwa is perhaps the best. This largest lake in the empire is said to have been made in a single night by the same awesome earthquake that erected Fuji-San—though whether this is true or not, even the gods have forgotten, since the event took place (or didn't) in B. C. 286. Anyway, you get a marvellous view from the top of the mountain going over; there are the famous Eight Views at Biwa itself, though, as generally happens in Japan, each of them is associated with a particular mood of nature, like "the Autumn Moon seen from Ishi-Yama", and nature may not oblige when you chance to be around; lastly, there is the opportunity to come back in a torch-lit boat through the tunnels of Biwa Canal, an experience that reminds you of delightfully-shuddery childhood experiences at Coney Island.

Anyone who has the time will want to go to Nara, Japan's first capital, where the charm of this little wonderful country began to differentiate itself from the older and quite different charm of China. Nara is such a little city—only about thirty thousand—but it has more temples than any one traveller is ever apt to see; it has a museum, too, really an enchanting place; and streets of little tempting shops. Best of all it has Nara Park, a great quiet bit of cultivated woodland where hundreds of little tame deer live, and play with the appreciative visitor who doesn't mind noses being poked into his pockets.

The Park is the centre of the year-round life in Nara—in December comes the great procession of men in medieval costume with lanterns and instruments of music, and horse-racing and wrestling afterward. The foreigner knows it has something to do with a dead and gone shogun, but beyond that he doesn't care, nor does the merry populace in the gaily lit Park. When Spring first comes—in early February—the Park is lit again, and for some reason or other, everybody goes to one of the temples and scatters beans! In June comes the wistaria, hanging from the great trees, and he would be no true Japanese who didn't make a festival

These are the farmer's raincoats — light, cool, inexpensive. The hats serve as umbrellas or parasols as the state of the weather dictates. And both hands are free for work.

out of that, as well as a poem. In October, the strangest of all the festivals concerns the cutting of the horns of a hundred of the deer, where local experts vie with each other in—shall we call them "deer-boy stunts"? Anyhow, the horns are made into curios, and no one has really been to Nara until he has such a curio to add to his ever-growing collection.

But we've got to stop somewhere, since we can't build a Japanese teahouse in our little booklet and settle down to talk forever!.....Yet there's Nagasaki with its huge harbor where the vessels are coaled by boatloads of little men and women made like squat idols—coaled with a rapidity and a precision and a lightheartedness that astonishes the beholder. Nagasaki has streets of interesting shops that sell everything imaginable in tortoiseshell—great lacy combs for high-piled hair, intricate little jewel boxes, little feathery-carved vanity mirrors that swing on long chains of tortoise shell links—and then there's the fun of play-acting the price down till the proprietor fairly makes you a present of it—and you go back to the boat and gloat! Nagasaki has temples, too, and canalsful of sampans, and nice hump-backed bridges, and hill after hill, so that most of the town looks down into each other's chimneys. . . .

But perhaps the most interesting place on the whole island

of Kyushu is Beppu—as characteristically Japanese as Nikko or Kyoto, though in quite a different way. For Beppu is where you go to have disease boiled out of you, digging a private bath for yourself on the hot-sanded seashore, if you're poor, or, if you can afford to be charged modestly, patronizing one of those amazing communal bathing-places which prove either the moral obliquity or the transcendent purity of the Japanese mind, according as you care to look at it, since no one wears anything whatsoever but an everlasting hope. (A thoughtful guidebook asks us not to photograph them, however. They don't seem to like it!) But there are many things we can photograph, for the whole region is full of sights—boiling mud pools—"hells" of many sorts, too hot to do anything but look at—caves and streams of various startling colors, infernal heats, and undoubted curative properties. And then, of course, Aso-San himself, that great still-smoky mountain whose scarred sides you may climb till you look down into his ghastly roaring throat!

All of Kyushu, in fact, comes as near being Japan before the advent of America as anything we'll ever see in a too-modern world. The consideration and courtesy of everybody concerned makes the process of seeing it as pleasant as the sights themselves. *But don't delay!* The world moves faster in Japan than anywhere else. And if you put off your journey another year or two—they may have harnessed Aso-San to run sewing-machines, and put all bathers into two-piece suits!

WHY DON'T *YOU* GO TO JAPAN ?

This book sounds as if somebody who wrote it had a good time in Japan—doesn't it? *You could have a good time too!*

The person who went wasn't rich—not as rich as you. But had always wanted to travel—just like you. Kept putting it off—as you do. Till finally—*she just went.*

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