

SIGHTS IN NIKKO

Railway Trains in Japan Are Not Noted for Speed.

HIGHWAYS ARE FINELY GUARDED

Many Acres Planted With Early Vegetables.

Prayers of Rice Planters for Destruction of Rats in the Fields.

[Special Correspondence.]

Nikko, September 6, 1897. EDITOR P. C. A.—We found it so hot in Tokyama that as soon as we could we got out of the heat into this mountain region. The air is cool and breezy; the sky was overcast this morning, but the mountain-tops stand out clear, and the characteristic marks of the day in the hills are seen to the eye.

It is a long ride from Tokyama to Nikko, 24 miles, in eight hours. There are no express trains, and changes are frequent from one road to another, with long waits in order to make connections. We left Tokyama at 12:45, and arrived at Nikko at 5 p. m. We had first-class tickets, and these gave us half a car with three long sofas, all to ourselves, as there were no other first-class passengers. At the different stations where we stopped, we were allowed the privilege of crossing the tracks. The Japanese passengers were permitted to go up and cross over on the bridges. Such numbers of them are traveling in every direction, it is well that they are looked after with such general care, but American sovereigns prefer to look out for themselves.

This constant stream of travel on all the Japanese thoroughfares is largely owing to the shrewd provision of the old Shoguns, who compelled the great Daimios to live at Tokyo six months of the year. They traveled to and from their homes in great state, with bands of retainers. They took pride in having the highways in their own provinces as smooth and pleasant as they could be made. From Utsunomiya, where the main road is left, there is a straight, broad, graded avenue to Nikko 27 miles long, lined with huge tall cypress-trees, a species of cedar. From the station in the village, at the head of which is the Kanetsu Hotel, is another avenue of cypress-trees. Following the village in the darkness, we found the streets wet with recent rain, and the rushing of the water in the gutters on either side of the road gave assurance of coolness, a welcome sound to travelers coming from the hot glare of Yokohama's narrow streets.

The railroad runs through the dead level of the Tokyama plain, with the lower end of the valley passing through a rolling country, more like Iowa, with well-wooded ridges, and similar "farm" borders, the ridges between. We could see in the dim distance the pyramidal peak of Mount Fuji, the great mountain of the Nikko range, rising itself into prominence on the horizon. It is 12,389 feet high, and wooded to the very summit. That is a peculiarity of these Japanese mountains. Otherwise, the country reminded me more of the South Highlands, with its green, than of Alpine scenery, with its lofty heights and deep-cleft valleys.

We passed scores of Japanese pears, grown on fat tree-tops. But the fruits have not much flavor. Japan lacks something to judge from our experience. Old residents tell us that the latter half of October and the whole of November are the best months for visiting the country, for then there is plenty of sunshine. We are disappointed in not finding peaches in this village. They were abundant at Karuizawa, and I have favored, four for 3 cents of our currency. We have salmon trout here, for the Government has stocked the lake above us. But the carp I do not relish. The Japanese are very fond of fishing. On the main wall in front of the Grand Hotel at Tokyama, on the boats in the creek, men and boys stood as close as they could to one another, each with his rod and line, some with two. One in a great white some one would draw up a small whiner, while a smile of supreme satisfaction brightened his face.

We have visited the mortuary temples, built in front of the tombs of the two greatest Shoguns, Iyeyasu and his grandson, Iemitsu. From time immemorial there has been a Shinto temple in this valley. The Shinto priests selected high places in sylvan retreats, or mountain peaks, for their places of devotion. We had on one railroad train a large band of pilgrims, all dressed in white, each with his staff and bells, en route for some shrine. Nikko is a favorite resort for the rice farmers early in the season. There are no rats in these temples. Their absence is attributed to the magic power of the carved image of a sleeping cat. The farmers come to pray for protection of their rice fields against rats. There is another story told of this marvelous cat, that whenever she sees it is going to rain, she winks with one eye. It reminds me of the similar story told of an image of St. Peter, that turns its eyes whenever it hears a cock crow.

Our hotel is on the brink of one of the conical hills, of which the valley of the Daiya-gawa, is full, and opposite those on which the various temples are built. The view from our windows in the early morning after our

arrival was specially beautiful. The first rays of dawn, dipped with roseate light some of the high peaks above us, while light clouds had veiled the various ridges beneath. This view, half veiled, half disclosing, was more beautiful than the full light of the sun as it shone out this morning over this whole mountain region. Nikko-sans means "Mountains of the Sun's Brightness," and has supplanted the old name Fusa-sa-yama. Two Storm Mountains, Kobo Takada, A. D. 890, started the storm demons that used to devastate the country, but our coming seems to have brought an unusual prevalence of rain, and we have seen very little, indeed, of the sun's brightness in this Nikko region.

We were favored with a morning without rain when we visited the temples. A broad avenue of rather steep ascent leads up the side of the hill, then turns at right angles, and turns again as it leads up to the temple gate, with double ways. The sides of the hill have been cut away, and are either lined with Japanese cedars, tall moss-grown, or the banks are walled in with massive cyclopean masonry, not the modern-day and Western architecture. The gravelled walks are ribbed every 12 feet with transverse lines of stone, so as to prevent the water from washing away the road. Some gutters on each side contain the water into the life channels, as it comes rushing down the sides of the roadway, or gushing out like clear mountain springs into the stone channels.

We crossed the Daiya just below the Sacred Red Bridge reserved for the Mikado, and closed to all others. It is said to have been built on the spot where the Shinto Saint, Shodo Shinin, crossed on a bridge, formed by two snakes, one green, one blue, and some deity threw across the stream in answer to the saint's prayer. General Grant was offered the privilege of crossing this bridge when he visited Nikko, but with characteristic modesty declined the honor not given to ordinary mortals.

The broad avenues through the forest of stately cedars enhance beyond all amount the grandeur of the approach to the temples. These are built, court after court, up the acclivity of the hill, each court with its gate house and special guardian figures, and granite steps, up which the long procession of priests and worshippers marched in imposing array. The influence of a ceremonial spectacular worship is strong, even in its decay, for Shintotism and Buddhism, with all the superstitious fears they formulate and foster, and long endure in a country of railroads and telegraphs and newspapers such as Japan is now. There is a water tower, gushing from the roadside. It has filtered through the green mold of ages of decay, and will poison with enteric fever those who drink it. So these religions of fear and cruelty must give place to the ever-living gospel of love and truth.

The impression made upon one on visiting these temples of holy antiquity, dating back to A. D. 1574, is not that of delight in beauty, but of wonder at such grotesque magnificence in such surroundings. The paneled ceilings are wrought with patient, painstaking workmanship in soft and harmonious colors. But the images that guard the gates are in hideous colors and distorted forms. The idols, or representatives of Buddha, are huge monstrosities, and the ideas they are supposed to represent are so various as the different ideas of observers and later preachers. Fudo, the God of Wisdom, is so represented that he is commonly called the God of Fire. The shrines are wondrously similar to those used in Roman Catholic worship, the genuflections, the incense, the incantations, he long to the same style of religious services.

The side-shows are of special interest, such as the five-storied pagoda, 164 feet high, 18 feet square, with the 11 signs of the Japanese zodiac, 5 on each side; the Sorinto, a bronze column, 41 feet high, with wind bells in the shape of lotus flowers; the drum house, the bell house, the treasure houses, where are kept the vestments, standards, masks and other articles used in the annual processions. Two store rooms are used for exhibition, where are shown various belongings of the great Iyeyasu, like the camp equipage of George Washington in the Patent Office galleries. A huge stone basin, hollowed out of one single block of granite, 84 feet long, 4 feet broad, 34 feet high, furnishes holy water for purification before worship. It was presented by the Prince of Hizen, A. D. 1619, and brought 15 miles from his quarters to its present location. We saw a gang of 50 coolies carrying a huge stone, slung on poles, up the temple road.

The bell, struck every hour, was more in the shape like a middle extinguisher than our bells with their wide lips. It was struck by a huge beam of wood, hung opposite its side, and gave out a muffled boom as the beam struck it. The second drum of tiger skin is beaten at 4 a. m., when the priests enter to say their visions, and again at 4 p. m., when the temple is closed. The priests live in the many residences that surround the temple inclosure. Those that we saw seemed perpetually drinking tea and smoking tobacco, sitting around a brazier of charcoal. The old priestesses, who with fan and rattle, postured and bowed for us before the shrine of Iyeyasu, seemed old enough to be decrepit, but performed her solemn function with dignified gravity, if not with agile grace. Two men paid for candles, as that would insure the Buddha's Trinity, as that would insure against accident or disaster on our journey. One man paid for a picture of Buddha, that placed against the wall upside down, would make any thief that entered our house unable to use his feet. Forty sen was the high price we had to pay for a carved image in wood of Fudo with his two attendants, only half an inch in height, yet exquisitely carved, and this carried about the person would insure us success in all our lawful undertakings.

The curio shops are full of fossil wood and curious knots, carved into all manner of shapes, boxes, teapots, cups, and so on indefinitely. I bought for 25 cents each a set of three monkey, carved in wood, called Koshin, and popular objects of worship at wayside shrines all over Japan. One covers his eyes with his hands, another his ears, the third his mouth, symbolizing

the needful object lesson in all countries that one must not see, hear or speak evil. Photographs are ridiculously cheap. Colored ones, 4 by 5 1/2, are only 20 cents a dozen. The traveler, in this way, can preserve for future reference views of scenes that he has viewed, and to look them over is almost like traveling again over the many interesting localities that he has been privileged to see.

This afternoon it rains, and it rains, and it rains, as it does most of the time in Japan. There is nothing to be done but sit at the window and watch the stream of travel passing up and down the valley. Jiarikishas, umbrellas, rain coats of bempen mats, rickshaws, tram-cars carrying freight up to the ashew's copper mines, or bringing down the ore, while the rushing streamlets, tumbling over the stony boulders, a cloud of blood-gray mist, with its roar and rattle, takes away the stillness which else would make the scene depressing in its desolation. At night, electric lamps will glint through among the trees on the wooded hillside opposite, far up the road to the temple is a line of telegraph poles, stilled for electric lighting, the rushing water turning a small dynamo that furnishes electric light for street and dwelling.

EDITOR P. C. A.—We had planned to leave Nikko on Friday, September 10th. But Thursday morning we were startled about 5 a. m. by the rush of wind with such furious strength as to slam the open blinds against the sash and break the glass. The rain came in furious gusts, and we had good reason to believe we were on the edge of a typhoon. And so it proved. One of these furious storms had struck the Bay of Yedo, and had ravaged Tokyo and the whole region round about. Trees were blown down, houses unroofed, fences laid flat, and then came a flood which submerged 5,000 houses and such a wide extent of country as to change the river into a lake six miles wide. The railroad track at one point was four feet under water. When we had got half way to the station, Friday, we were sent back with the message that there was no getting to Tokyo that day. We found that we could make the trip to Lake Chumoni and return before the 7 o'clock dinner.

The storm had subsided as suddenly as it rose, and the sun was shining as serenely as though it did not look on a scene of desolation, wrought in a few hours' duration of the storm. No great damage had been done at Nikko. The trees that had been uprooted around the hotel had been quickly reset and propped up with long bamboo poles. The road to the lake was passable, for quite a number of coolies had come down from the hotel there on their way to other places. Each jiarikisha had three coolies, one in the shafts, one with a rope to pull in tandem style, one to push. So we started on the eight miles' trip. We found the road for the first half of the way comparatively smooth, the ascent being very gradual. But when we left the road to the Ashio copper mines, we found the road wild as any mountain road can well be. In many places it was cut out of the solid rock, so that the foundation rock was sure enough though narrow. No one had removed the loose stones that had fallen during the storm, nor the trees that had blown down across the path. But the jiarikisha men picked their way among the stones and lifted the vehicle over the fallen trees, and kept on till they reached a wayside inn, a half-way station, where they halted for an hour, drank tea and smoked their pipes.

We started again up a wooded hillside that projected into the valley between the channel of the Daiya-gawa, and a fearful chasm on the other side, a clean cut through a bed of gravel, 4,000 feet deep. The road zigzagged through the clay soil among the huge rocks. The loops were as sharp in their turns as the hairpin loops on the Koba railroad, and proportionately shorter. One jiarikisha held one's breath as the coolies turned the sharp corners of the zigzag, looking off at the foaming rapids in the gorge below. Nor did the road look particularly secure, as it crossed various landslides on rude timbers, propping up a wretched platform with a foot of earth to make it smooth riding. Occasionally we came to places where the mud must have been two feet deep during the storm, but we did not mind the dry for the coolies to pull us through, and we cried and grunts as they tugged along together. They had nothing but straw soles tied on their feet, and two of them lost these in the mud.

Half way up they rested at a tea house that commanded a fine view of the gorge below, and showed clearly what an ascent we had made. The lower half of the valley up which we had passed had been pretty well denuded of its forests by the charcoal burners, whose pits could see smoking on the mountain sides away below us. We enjoyed the rest and the tea, as well as the coolies, sitting on the black striped red blankets with which the long benches in these Japanese tea houses are covered. A quarter of an hour sufficed to rest the jiarikisha men, and it was soon evident that we were nearing the crest of the ridge. A short ride through the grove on top, and we were soon at the hotel with the lake spread out before us in all its stillness and beauty.

It is a sheet of water three miles wide by eight long, at a height of 4,275 feet above sea level, and a measured depth of 558 feet. On the right Mount Nantzen rises in pyramidal form, wooded to the summit, a height of 8,150 feet above the level of the sea. In July or August we were told, 10,000 pilgrims come up to make the ascent. It is a sacred mountain. At its top is a shrine, where murderers may cast the weapon with which they committed the crime, and be assured of the divine forgiveness. In October it is said to be a mass of red color, when the maple leaves are tinted with the autumn tints.

We rested for an hour at the hotel, a curious compound of Japanese and Yankee architecture, ate ouriffin, and then enjoyed a half hour's boat ride on the lake. The lake is irregular in shape, but the hillside that forms the rim of the basin are wooded clear down to the water's edge. As the ridge projects, and recedes there is a vista of mysterious depths beyond, especially when the mists come down, dividing off the landscape, like the shifting scenes of

the stage in the theater. The lake is well stocked with salmon and salmon trout, but we had no time to fish, or have the fish caught and cooked, which would have been the proper thing to do on an excursion less hasty than ours. We had left the Nikko Hotel at 11:15 a. m. and arrived at 2:30 p. m. at the lake. We left the lake at 4 p. m. and arrived at Nikko at 8 o'clock, the jiarikisha men not breaking their trot from the half-way house till they brought us back to the Nikko Hotel. We came down much faster than horses could trot around such sharp turns, and were thankful enough for the delightful afternoon we had spent, trying as it had been to a woman's nerves, yet full of glimpses of beauty that make us ready to believe that Nikko-san is the central point and the north point of the mountain scenery of Japan, as well as of its wonderful temple architecture. H.

CAREER OF THE PORTLAND. Notable History of the Steamer Just Back From Alaska.

The permission granted by the Navy Department for the docking of the Alaskan steamer Portland in the Government dock at Seattle brings to the minds of Treasury officials a story of much interest, says the Washington Star. The Portland is now one of the most famous vessels in the world, having been one of the first to bring down millions of dollars in nuggets from the Klondike country, and many happy miners. The news which she first brought in had a great deal to do with the excitement which has since become universal.

In 1853 the Portland was as well known as she is today, but then it was in another direction. She then became notorious as a smuggler of opium into Portland. Her history is worth reading. The steamer was built at Bath, Me., in 1835, for use during a Haytian revolt. She is of 1,089 tons gross. The Haytiens didn't pay for her. She had, however, been christened the Haytien Republic, and went under this name for years. She was finally bought by a packing company in San Francisco for running to and from the company's canneries in Alaska. The next thing heard of her she was sold to the Merchants' Transportation Company of Portland, and it was supposed that she was still engaged in legitimate traffic. In a short time the Government officials ascertained that an immense amount of opium was being smuggled into Portland. It was not known how this was being done, but shrewd special agents were put to work, and they began to suspect the Haytien Republic. The result of their suspicions were wholesale arrests of prominent people, over 40 being indicated. Among these were the owners of the steamer, the Collector of Customs and an ex-Treasury agent. The conspiracy was found to be wholesale, and the arrests created profound sensations on the Pacific Coast.

It was ascertained before the trials of the offenders had been concluded that the operations of the Haytien Republic had lost the Government over \$300,000 in duties on opium. The Haytien Republic was fitted up with secret compartments and the opium was smuggled in these. The owners of the vessel at the time of the discovery owed \$10,000 on her. They had bought her for \$12,000, and had paid \$32,000. The vessel was libeled by the Government and sold at a marshal's sale. She was bid in for \$16,900 by her present owners, who have since kept her at legitimate work in Alaskan waters.

The owners knew that the reputation of the vessel would be prejudicial to her, and they made application to the Treasury Department to be allowed to change her name. They stated in their application, which is on file at the Treasury, that the illegal acts of the vessel had placed her in such bad repute that she would be looked upon with suspicion at every port. This suspicion, they said, would cause annoyance in searches and delay and expense. The Treasury fully consented to a change of name, and the Haytien Republic was christened the Portland. She was repaired, refitted and re-engaged in business in Alaskan waters.

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