A NORTH CAROLINIAN ON AFFAIRS IN JAPAN

A letter Which Gives An Intimate View of Matters And Events in the Flowery Kingdom With Comments of Interest.

By W. A. GRAHAM CLARK.

We had a rather rough trip from Seattle to Yokohama on the "Shidzuoka Maru" of the Nippon Yuson Kaisha and had the racks on the table most of the time. Some of the ladies resigned their seats at the table early in the proceedings but most of us were old sailors and preferred the tail end of a typhoon to a dead monotony. Part of the time we made over 300 knots a day but for three days running we averaged less than 250, the ship spending the other 50 knots in pitching and rolling. We took the Great Circle which brought us close to Unalaska and about six days out we saw the snowy summits of one of the Aleutian Island. We met only one ship during the whole 15 days but saw plenty of whales and porpoises, while petrels followed us the whole way over. We crossed the 180th meridian at night so did not see it. The menu at dinner read Tuesday, September 30, while at breakfast the next morning it read Thursday, October 2nd. The first of October, 1913, like the 5th of September, 1916 of my previous trip, was lost out of my calendar entirely. Seems funny to lose two days out of one's life and never see them go. We moved the clock back about half an hour every night, amounting to 7 hours and 15 minutes by the time we got to Yokohama, but as we jumped a whole day on arrival we were 16 3-4 hours ahead of Seattle, and the cable I sent must have gotten home long before I sent it.

I find Japan as interesting as ever, and in its state of transition the close contrast of Eastern and Western Methods and customs is most instructive. One sees the most up-to-date bank buildings of stone and cement side by side with the flimsy native houses of smooth wood and oiled paper, men in full European costumes side by side with those in kimona and clogs, fine automobiles screeching for the right of way over rikshas and heavy cars pulled by men, narrow and unpaved and ill smelling lanes opening out from broad, well constructed avenues along which run modern electric cars. The bulk of the people still live, eat, dress and act as their forefathers did, but signs of Western ideas are to be seen everywhere, especially in the large cities.

United and Cosmopolitan.

What impresses one most in travelling around the world is the fact that within a couple of decades the world which was formerly sectional and provincial has begun to become united and cosmopolitan; in every country the best and most advanced ideas as to housing, social customs, and methods of commerce and government are being eagerly sought after and adopted to local needs; and as the railroad, the steamship and the telegraph, not to mention the rapidly increasing population, tend to bring peoples shoulder to shoulder and to break down barriers, this old planet is becoming a much better and more comfortable one on which to live. Not the least significant sign of the times is the trend towards the city beautiful, and in Japan as in America, in Germany, in India, we find the paths being made broad and straight and sunshine being let in. In Japanese cities there were formerly only narrow, unpaved lanes without sidewalks and with practically no sanitation, but today in Tokyo, Kyoto, Oseka, etc., there are being driven through each town broad, straight avenues with curbed sidewalks, street cars, electric lights, sewerage, etc., and as the old buildings are torn down to make way for these they are largely replaced with better and more up-to-date structures. Tokyo in especial is doing a lot of this work, and as they had a large center from which to start the work there has been easier.

In old times the Shotgun or generalissimo who exercised the prerogative of the Emperor resided at Tokyo. His palaces were within a moated wall and outside were two other circumscribing walls with moats, the intermediate spaces being filled with the residences of the daimios and barracks for their retainers. In 1868 the Emperor seized the executive power and occupied the palaces of the Shotgun, but the first space outside was parked and the second given over to modern banks, theatres, and place of business, while the outer wall is now utilized in part as an embankment for suburban electric cars. In these outer grounds in the center of the city a broad avenue was constructed all the way around the inner moat and from this beginning, broad avenues were driven out through the most crowded sections of the city and from these broad streets opened out at right angles. Tokyo is a big city of over 2,000,000 inhabitants and though much of it is still more primitive and backward, it is gradually being improved, and in time will be one of the world's most beautiful capitals. There are numerous canals in Tokyo as in Yokohama, Kyota, Osaka, Kobe, etc., in cast a Japanese city has to be very unfavorably located to prevent the natives cross sectioning it with canals. The center of Japan has long beenconsidered to be the "Nippon Bashi" or Bridge of Japan in Tokyo as from this point, have always been measured the distances along the main roads of the country as where those of the Romans from their golden mile stone at the Forum. Formerly it was a humpbacked wooden structure, but is now built on stone and concrete, though still arched, for Japanese never build a bridge on the level whether the arch is needed for boat room or not.

The Menu In Japan.

Japanese live on boiled rice, raw eggs, fish raw or cooked, pickles, and sake (a Japanese whiskey distilled from rice.) Taxes are extremely high and still increasing. Japanese houses are most flimsy with thin walls of smoothed wood and oiled paper, with sliding panels so the whole front can be opened up during the day, and the people sleep on the floor on quilts. Men and women wear kimonas, with bare legs, and shuffle along on wooden clogs raised a few inches from the ground and which are held on by strap passing between the first and second toes, in their houses or stores they leave their clogs outside and go barefooted or wearing only short cloth socks made with a division for the big toe. The poorest class wear hemp or straw sandals and have raincoats of stray tied around their necks.

The Japanese are a very polite race which makes it pleasant for those traveling in Japan. They bow instead of shaking hands. The bow of the men is singularly awkward as well as selfconscious as they bow or rather duck stiffly from the hips without moving their feet, but slightly bending their knees. The girls are more graceful at it, but to see a girl bidding her companions bood-bye at a street corner, the interminable bowing reminds one of the way ducks act after a rain. When the ceremony is finally over and one has shuffled away home, the manner in which the other girls look after her and smile and gossip about her, reminds one that human nature is about the same the world over. Women in Japan never wear hats, but arrange their long and rather coarse black hair in fantastic shapes, this being done by professional hair dressers every other day or so, who oil and stiffen it with every hair smoothly in place until it looks more like ebony carvings. There are numerous popular styles, called after the names of the leading hairdressers, but the styles for girls are always different from those for married women. Some of the younger girls who wear their hair down their back, look much prettier and much more natural than after the hairdressers have started their artificial and conventional work of socalled art.

Japanese babies are never kissed, but it may be mentioned also that Japanese babies are seemingly entire strangers to handkerchiefs. Babies are always carried on the black, in a cloth tightly knotted around the shoulders, either by their mothers or sisters. They have to stand a lot of jolting when their young sisters run about playing, but seem to take it as a matter of fact though many of them have weak eyes due to being so much exposed to the sun while strapped so they cannot move themselves. It is incorrect, however, to say that Japanese children never laugh or cry, for I have heard some of them bawling most lustily. So common is the custom of carrying babies on the back, that women take them to the theatre or other places of amusement this way and one occasionally sees little tots with their dolls strapped on in the same way.

Japanese eat soup last instead of first, they dry themselves with steaming wet towels, they pull their planes and saws instead of pushing them. The back of their book is the front of ours and they write from top to bottom, starting each vertical line at the left of the one preceding. In these and many other ways they strike as topsy turvy, but they have the same feeling towards our customs and it all depends on which side of the world one is which is right.

"A Hot Time" Parade.

At Tokyo I saw a night procession of some thousands of students. They were headed by a brass band playing "A Hot Time In the Old Town Tonight" and were singing a college song set to the foreign music. Each carried a guady Japanese lantern on a pole and they seemed as jolly as a crowd of American college students. At one of the theatres, I saw some of the best Geisha dancers. The dancing was more posturing than actual dancing, according to our notions, but was more decorous and graceful and artistic in every way than the animal dances which are all the rage in respectable society in America today. They danced to the music of three stringed samisen, flute, and Japanese drum, while others sang explaining the incidents the dance featured. I don't care much for Japanese singing, however, as it reminds one too much of cats on the back fence and as for poetry, I am informed that one of their most prized poems runs are follows:

"On a withered twig.
Lo, the crow is sitting there.
Oh, this autumn eve!"

That is the entire poem, and how a man could sit down and work himself into extasies of poetic bliss over such stuff, even with plenty of sake, is hard to comprehend, and why his fellow creatures throw him fresh bouquets instead of ancient eggs, is still harder to understand.

Japanese trains are clean and operated on time, though at a slow pace. They are made with two seats down the sides, like some of our street cars, and most of the men and women shuffle out of their clogs and and curl up on the seats and drink tea most of the journey, carrying their inevitable teapot and cup along with them.

Their Imperial Majesties.

At Kyoto I saw their Imperial Majesties when they came there to pay their respects at the mausoleum of the former Emperor. The Emperor with two generals rode in the first carriage, and the Empress and two ladies, in European costume in the second. I am informed that the Court wears European dress one day and Japanese the next. The carriages were ordinary covered top ones, drawn ones, drawn by single pairs of horses, but the windows were down and I had a good view. The Emperor is about thirty-four, rather slight with a small mustache, and wore the plain Japanese uniform, snuff-colored, with red collar and cuffs, and a few medals. Immediately in front of his carriage was carried his Royal banner, which is a small square red flag with the sixteen petalled chrysanthemums on it in gold. Preceding and following the procession was a troop of cavalry. The streets were lined with soldiers on one side while the people stood on the other side watched by a row of police with their backs to the Emperor. All shops and houses were closed and shuttered as no one is allowed to look down on the ruler. The people stood with bared heads and stared at the Emperor, and he stared impassively at his line of soldiers on the other side of the street so they passed in dead silence, it being considered indecorous to cheer. Kyoto is an interesting place with many temples and shrines. For over a thousand years, until 1868, when the Emperor displaced the Shotgun and moved to Tokyo, it was the seat of Empire and many historic events have taken place here.

Kyoto, Japan, October 20, 1913.

Mr. W. A. Graham Clark, son of Chief Justice Walter Clark, is now traveling in the Government service in Japan and the East. The above letter was written to a relative in this city and gives a first-hand account of interesting matters.

MR. HENRY A. DENNIS

Editor Greenville Reflector On Staff of The News and Observer.

Mr. Henry Arnold Dennis, who has for several months been the editor of the Greenville Reflector has resigned that postition to accept a place on the local staff of The News and Observer. He is a graduate of Trinity College in last year's class and was the correspondent of this paper at that college. On the Greenville Reflector he has shown ability as a newspaper man, and this paper is glad to have him in its service.

The Wilmington Dispatch has the following to say: "Mr. Henry A. Dennis, who for past several months has been editor of the Greenville Reflector, has resigned that postion and joined the staff of the Raleigh News and Observer. The former paper loses a good writer and the latter gains a good one. Mr. Dennis became editor of The Reflector, succeeding Mr. D. J. Whichard, who was appointed postmaster of Greenville, but who, however, still heads the company that publishes the paper."

The Rocky Mount Telegram says: "Mr. Henry Arnold Dennis, who following his graduation the past summer at Trinity College has been connected with the Greenville Reflector as editor during the past several months has resigned that postion to enter upon duties of local work on The News and Observer. Few young men during recent years have had the rise in newspaperdom that has come the way of Mr. Dennis who has by strict attention at duty, had the rapid rise 'in the game' that he has deserved.

An insulating material made from milk curds has been invented in Russia.

Some 280 British cities maintain municipal market houses.

HENRY B. VARNER VISITS CAPITAL

Wants Some of the Rank and File Provided For.

RETICENT ON THE RACE

Deeply Interested in Various Things State Might Do To Stop Drain on Its Resources —Regards Fight Against Preventable Disease as Greatest Battle State is Waging at Present.

(By W. E. YELVERTON.)

Washington, D. C., Nov. 29.—H. B. Varner, good roads enthusiast, indefatigable Democrat and unvarying optimist, was in Washington this week to hustle for jobs for some of the unprovided for in Davidson county. He is not seeking any $5,000 places, but merely wants to allow some of the rank and file who have done party service to contract with the entrancing yellow of Government money.

As to the political task his friends have cut out for him, that of running for Congress in opposition to Rep. Robert N. Page, he is still reticent. His comment on current politics in North Carolina is interesting, to say the least. "The most inviting field in North Carolina politics is running for United States Senator," he says. A man in that race is certain to win. If he isn't elected Senator, he gets a good job which will pay between $4,500 and $10,000 a year."

Mr. Varner is, as everybody knows, a continual campaigner though his activities are not always political. Just now he is deeply interested in the State's deficit of forty-five million dollars annually in loss of life and doctors' bills growing out of preventable disease. He says that the State loses twenty millions annually on account of bad roads while the loss from excessive freight rates is not more than five millions, thus making the fight against preventable diseases the greatest battle in the State. Cleaning up, followed by continued sanitation, he says, will wipe out these preventable diseases. Keeping livery stables clean, hog pens sanitary and stagnant, water drained, he says, can produce a flyless town as Greensboro was flyless and mosquitoless in 1913, reducing the doctors' bills just half. The same sort of campaign was waged in Asheville with equally gratifying results. The Greensboro campaign cost but $148.12.

Mr. Varner wants to see the State relieved of some of its burdens by tax revision, and he wants to see it get its full benefit from the work of convicts. He estimates the loss to the State as $200,000 a year, following the present policy of working the convicts on the railroads at $1.50 a day each, paid for, he says, with worthless stock in the roads. The State could get $2 a day cash for the convicts' work on the farms, he believes, instead of getting practically nothing now and pay out $1.75 a day in cash for food, clothing and guarding. What he advocates, however, is working them on public roads, the counties to pay for their maintenance in return for the work. A hundred are now on the roads, fifty on the Central Highway, and fifty on the road between Asheville and Charlotte.

SHOT INTO WINDOW.

Bedstead of Sleeping Man Riddled With Buckshot—A Clue But No Arrest Yet.

Washington, N. C., Nov. 29.—Word was received here today that a tenant on Frank L. Huggins place near Montague was fired upon through a window while he slept at his home last night. The shotgun was loaded with buck shot and seven of the shot were found in the bedstead, some on the head and some in the foot. The tenant got up and returned the fire but did not hit his assailant. A man living in the community is under suspicion. Mr. Huggins who lives here will go up Sunday to make investigation.

The Outgo Gets Us.

On the other hand, however, those of us who don't have to worry about the income tax are made mighty uneasy by the outgo tax.—Indianapolis News.

A married man's application for membership in a club may be an admission that marriage is a failure—as far as he is concerned.