

## Our Foreign Letter.

### A DAY OFF IN JAPAN.

The leafy month of June, and alas! the very dampest and steamiest month in this flowery land. Having finished a somewhat trying rest cure case, I bethought me that a little extra fresh air and exercise would be beneficial before starting work again, so on my way to the Nurses' Home I tackled our Secretary on the score of a "day off." After due and solemn consideration and consultation of a ponderous tome, she gave a provisional consent, telling me I must give all particulars as to my destination, time of starting, and return, etc., etc. The latter questions were rather posers, for I had made no plans, but we finally arranged that I should telephone her that night, giving details. Both my colleagues were on duty, and a "day off" on my lonesome did not appeal somehow, therefore I made quick tracks to my little American journalist friend, commonly known as the "Chipmunk." That damsel rose to the occasion promptly and began mapping out an expedition with great zeal, ordaining that we should rise early, take the express from Tokyo to Yokohama, and then change trains for Kamakura, a little seaside resort about an hour's journey further on (in its palmy days it was the capital of Eastern Japan), from there cross to Enoshima, a picturesque island about four miles from Kamakura, celebrated for its uphill street of shops full of corals, shells, and the beautiful glass-rope sponge. We would "tiffin" at a tea house, and return in time for dinner. The "Chipmunk" had much advice to give, stipulating firmly that as the weather was so uncertain we must go suitably clad—serge skirts and strong boots, no muslins, and brown paper shoes. Inwardly I groaned, and meekly suggested holland or drill as more suited to the temperature, but the "Chipmunk" was obdurate, and, as usual, I obeyed.

My next move was to telephone our Secretary, giving details, to which that lady replied that she hoped my holiday would be undisturbed.

Having set my house—or rather my uniform trunk—in order, I retired early, giving our old amah (house servant) strict orders to call me at 5.30, and to have breakfast ready by 6 o'clock. That worthy dame deemed it necessary to sleep the clock round, if possible, and while the early retiring hour appealed to her, the early to rise did not. She raised various objections, foretold rain, and was generally unhappy. However, 5.30 found her standing by my bed announcing "Ahayo gozaimasu": good morning. The sky looked quite promising, and I felt sad as I regarded the substantial serge skirt and clumping boots. By the time Tokyo Station was reached, I felt I fairly loathed those useful and unattractive garments, but the "Chipmunk" awaited me there looking hotter if possible than I did. To my would-be-cheerful remark of "lovely day," she responded with a grunt and a muttered remark of "rain later on."

The train was delightfully crowded, as there was some big function at Yokosuka, a station lower down the line, but we managed to crowd in, and

amused ourselves watching a Japanese family packing, unpacking, and re-packing a huge sort of sack-like bag, which appeared to accommodate endless chattels.

On arrival at Kamakura, the "Chipmunk" decreed we should first visit the Hachiman Shrine, as it was near to the Station. On either side of the road are shops full of guides to Kamakura, picture postcards, quaint toys, and shells, suggesting somehow a glorified Clacton, or Southend. Passing through a broad avenue of pines, we stopped to admire the thousand-year-old camphor tree, 20 feet in circumference, with its polished, odorous green leaves; then mounted a wide flight of stone steps leading to a sort of gallery in which are displayed many ancient palaquins, which originally figured in religious processions. The venerable Priest also showed us some quaint armour and other relics, said to belong to one Yoritomo, of Japanese historical fame.

Having finished the Hachiman Temple, we made quick tracks for the Daibutsu. This wonderful statue reposes in beautiful grounds, which at the time of our visit were gorgeous with big water iris and azaleas. On entering the grounds you do not at first see the Daibutsu, but when he comes into full view he is a most impressive sight. A huge bronze figure over 49 ft. high, and 97 ft. in circumference. The eyes, which are half closed, are of pure gold, the head is covered with curls (830 in all), while the silver boss on the forehead weighs 30 lbs. On either side there are magnificent lotus plants of bronze 15 ft. high, and the Buddha is seated on an enormous lotus blossom, through an opening in which you can enter into the statue. By a ladder therein you can climb as high as the shoulders, in which are two little windows, giving a good view of the grounds. The priest told us the statue was about 630 years old, and asked for a small donation to help towards the building of a new temple, the previous one having been swept away by a tidal wave following an earthquake. Nothing would have pleased me better than to contemplate the Daibutsu for a long time, but the "Chipmunk" was eager to proceed.

Our next destination was the Kwannon Temple (Kwannon is the Goddess of Mercy and Pity), standing at the top of a long flight of steps. Near the entrance is a weird statue about life-size, with small amazing eyes. On either side are the Ni O, furious looking images with enormous muscles and red bodies, nearly covered with small paper pellets spat at them by worshippers. Before permitting us to see the image of Kwannon, the priest presented us with a petition written in English, beseeching alms towards the maintenance of this temple. Then he lighted a lantern and led us through a low doorway into inky darkness. As we got accustomed to the gloom, we could see a pair of golden feet, and then the priest lit two more lanterns, fastened them to ropes, and raised both very slowly. This revealed a marvelous golden image with a placid, smiling face, surmounted by a tiara of heads and faces—girls' faces. The image is about 30 ft. high. Even the irrepressible "Chipmunk" was so impressed that

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