

KAMIYAMA, HAKONE MOUNTAINS, JAPAN.

BY J. A. PARKER.

I SUPPOSE that there comes a time in all Round-the-World Cruises when the "Cruisers" get simply "fed up" with temples and the like. In my case this stage was reached at Kobe, after a hectic two days' mass excursion to Kyoto and Nara. There I finally decided that I would *not* go with the ship's party to Tokyo and Nikko to see more temples, but would strike out on my own for the nearest group of mountains—the Hakone group.

I had been advised at Kobe by Mr. Matsukata, of the Japanese Alpine Club, that Fujiyama was impracticable so early in the year and that, should I wish to climb it, I would require to stop over in Yokohama for about a couple of months. The best thing for me to do would be to climb Kamiyama (4,716 feet), the highest of the Hakone Mountains, which could quite easily be done during the four days that the "Empress of Australia" was to remain at Yokohama. After leaving Kobe I explained the situation and my intentions to a number of the most likely of my friends on the steamer in hope that I might get a companion, but none would join me. All were for seeing the temples at Nikko and the re-building of Tokyo.

We arrived at Yokohama at an early hour on Monday, March 5, 1928, and were scheduled to have four days ashore, but unfortunately the first day was completely lost on account of a very severe snowstorm which lasted the entire day. All shore excursions were cancelled and very few of the passengers left the steamer.

Tuesday, however, was all right, and before breakfast I went up on to the boat deck and, to my surprise, saw the summit of Fujiyama over the roofs of the intervening buildings. It seemed to be quite near, in spite of the fact that it was 48 miles off. Curiously enough that is practically the same distance that Lochnagar is distant from Aberdeen ; but then Fujiyama (12,370 feet) is three and a quarter times as high. As giving some idea of its great height, calculation shows that were Lochnagar raised to the same height as Fujiyama (pity that it couldn't !) a person standing at Girdleness Lighthouse would see something like 7,750 feet of the mountain above the level of the top of the Hill of Fare. However this is by the way.

After breakfast I took a jinrickisha to the railway station, and at 8.45 a.m. saw the "Empress" special passing through with the ship's company for Tokyo. Twenty minutes later I left with the ordinary south-bound train for Odawara, 30 miles distant on the east coast. The journey there was very interesting and extremely beautiful, as the trees were thickly coated with yesterday's snow. I was interested in the lay-out of the railway, which conformed to the British practice of taking as little land as possible. Rather a contrast to what I had seen in China and, later on, was to see in America.

At Odawara I left the train and joined a motor bus which conveyed me quickly over eight miles of a very twisty road to Miyanoshita (1,377 feet). This is a small summer resort in the heart of the Hakone Mountains and is entirely new, the old village having been completely destroyed by the earthquake in 1923. In fact the whole place gave one an impression of newness and rawness, the buildings being new and the "V" shaped valleys evidently being in a state of active denudation.

The Fujiya Hotel at which I put up for two nights was delightful, externally of purely Japanese design, and internally run on the best European or American lines. And no swank about it. Delightful gardens surrounded the hotel, and at the back there was a big open-air swimming pool, fed with hot water from springs in the vicinity.



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(1) ROAD NEAR MIYANOSHITA.



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(2) OJIGOKU, OR THE BIG HELL.

After lunch I walked up the valley in a north-westerly direction for about four and a quarter miles to the little village of Sengoku and thence climbed up a steep path in a gully to the summit of the hills in this direction, at a point called Otome-toge (3,276 feet). From here the hills slope down to the plain of Gotemba, beyond which Fujiyama stood in all its majesty at a distance of 16 miles, to the north-west. The whole country was white with snow, and the summit of Fuji was partly hidden with cloud. To the south-east stood my friend Kamiyama, who was on my programme for the morrow. Quite a big hill but with no very pronounced feature. It is a half-extinct volcano. After a very delightful rest on the Otome-toge I retraced my steps to Sengoku, from which a motor bus took me back to Miyanoshita in good time for an excellent dinner. In the evening Mr. Matsukata telephoned from Tokyo stating that he was coming on to Miyanoshita to-morrow and would arrive late in the forenoon.

On Wednesday I took the 9 o'clock bus to Ashinoyu (2,870 feet), about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant on the road to Hakone Lake. The road was very badly iced, and the drive not altogether pleasant in consequence, so that I was not at all sorry when the bus put me down at Ashinoyu. There were about nine inches of soft snow all over, and latterly the path was just a little difficult to locate through the thick scrub on the upper slopes. The climb was, however, of the simplest nature, but took about a couple of hours all the same. The summit of Kamiyama was reached at 11.45 a.m. Visibility was perfect. Three miles to the north-west was the black ridge on which I had been yesterday afternoon. Beyond lay the Gotemba Plain, thickly coated with snow, and rising on the far side of it was the shapely cone of Fujiyama. In the extreme distance were the Japanese Alps, stretching north and south as far as the eye could reach.

Below me to the south-east lay the east coast of Japan, and beyond it the Pacific, clear to the horizon, with, floating on its surface as it were, the little island of Vries, rendered conspicuous by the cloud of steam rising from its active volcano.

It was the view of a lifetime, and some one asks—Have you ever seen a finer? I will not say that I have, but I have seen one or two that run it pretty close, and of them the unforgettable view that I had from Sgurr Alasdair in 1895 was quite as fine, if not even better.

I lingered on the summit for fully an hour and then tried to "figure out" the trail from the summit down the north-west slope of the hill to Ojigoku (the "Big Hell"), a place to which the hotel manager had strongly, and quite politely, told me to go to. It is a sore place on the north-east slope of the hill, commencing about 1,500 feet below the summit. As the upper part of the hill was thickly covered with scrub and the path completely hidden by snow, the only indication that I had of the position of the path was the clearing through the scrub. Even this was difficult to follow, and it was only after a rather long false lead that I got on to the right path, and followed it down the hill-side to the top of the "Big Hell." This is a sort of open glen, or gash in the hill, from the base and sides of which steam, gases, and hot water emerge. At places the floor of the place is very soft and treacherous. At the top there is a little shack run by a Japanese, who gave me a cup of very weak tea and then guided me across the soft part of the gully on to firm ground. Were one to wander from the path hereabouts, one might easily get bogged in rather hot stuff. In fact the place thoroughly merits its name. Some of the hot water is led in pipes down to the hotels. The path downwards, after the soft place, was quite good, and by following it for some distance I came to a funicular railway, a convenient car on which took me down to the main road and so back to the hotel.

On arrival I found Mr. Matsukata there. He had turned up about eleven and taken a run across to Hakone Lake. We spent a very pleasant evening together and next day journeyed back to Yokohama. I invited him to lunch on the "Empress," but he very decently declined, and made a counter motion that I should lunch with him in the new hotel on the Bund. He clinched his argument by saying that I must be rather fed up with ship's food, and I could not



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(3) KAMIYAMA FROM OTEME-TOGE.



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(4) FUJIYAMA FROM KAMIYAMA.

say him nay. After lunch we rambled about the ruins of Yokohama, which presented a very desolate appearance. A start had only been made with the rebuilding of the city.

The ship sailed the same evening and then, of course, on telling a young Englishman where I had been, he said "I wish to goodness that you had told me that you were going to Miyanoshita as I would have come with you like a shot." Such are the ironies of life.

Fujiyama is sometimes climbed during the winter, but the difficulty in 1928 was that there was no satisfactory resting place available at that season higher than Subashiri (2,520 feet), nearly 10,000 lower than the summit. In summer time there is, of course, no difficulty whatever, as there is a good path most of the way, and the rest houses are open all the way up and on the summit. In winter it is a different matter altogether, as the following brief particulars of an ascent made by Mr. J. S. Kennard on January 3/4, 1928, will show. Leaving Tokyo by train at 6.50 a.m., Subashiri was reached via Gotemba about mid-day. With one companion he left Subashiri at 13.15 and reached the second hut (c. 5,000 feet) about 17.30, where the night was spent. The hut was left the next morning at 2.20 and the party climbed up to the fifth hut (8,659 feet), where Mr. Kennard's companion refused to go any further. Mr. Kennard, who had ice axe and crampons, left the hut by himself at 7.00 and reached the rim of the crater at 11.05. He then proceeded to walk round the crater and did not commence the descent of the peak until 14.55. The fifth hut was passed at 16.15 and Subashiri reached at a time that was not stated in the newspaper account, but must have been very late. The above particulars were taken from a Tokyo newspaper and, after reading the full description, I formed the impression that the expedition must have been extremely arduous, and that Mr. Kennard was lucky in having escaped a night out in the forest. The climb cannot be comfortably done in winter until one of the summer huts has been put in order and made available for

winter climbers, and I understood that the Japanese Alpine Club have some such project in view.

Photograph No. 2 was taken looking up the "Big Hell," from a point on the path about 750 feet lower than the rest house (just visible on the sky-line to the right of the steam cloud). The escaping steam is well seen, and the trestle bridge in the left foreground carries hot water down to the hotels. The summit of Kamiyama is high up to the left and out of the view.

No. 3 was taken looking S.E. from the Oteme-toge. Kamiyama was climbed from the other side, and the "Big Hell" is on the near side, just at the foot of the conspicuous ridge leading down to the left from the summit. Miyanoshita is in the valley to the left of Kamiyama.

No. 4 was taken from the summit of Kamiyama, looking N.W. The Oteme-toge ridge is conspicuous and beyond it is the Gotemba plain.