

ON TRAIL OF THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY



Among the Strange Gods.

By William T. Ellis.
Copyright, 1906, by Joseph B. Bowles.

KARUIZAWA, Japan.—Exactly how a missionary goes about introducing his teachings to a "heathen" community which knows absolutely nothing about Christianity is an interesting point seldom made plain. Now, I have seen it done, and the procedure is worth describing. This trip to a large interior town, where missionaries and Christianity are unknown with the incidents which befell by the way, was the most interesting experience thus far encountered in Japan.

In several features this particular preaching expedition was abnormal. It was made in connection with an excursion to the famous hot springs of Kusatsu by a party of missionaries who are spending their vacation in Karuzawa, the largest summer resort for foreigners in Japan. There were eight young American missionaries, two Japanese teachers or evangelists, and myself, in the party which started early one morning for the 25-mile walk over the mountains to Kusatsu. It was worth while to get this intimate view of missionaries, for three days' hard travel under these conditions was enough to reveal the inwardness of a man's nature.

Just Like Ordinary Mortals.

And I must say that I did not find these men, especially different from any other crowd of educated young men. They told stories by the hundred, made bad puns, "played horse" with one another, and altogether behaved like schoolboys out on a lark. There was not enough preacherly dignity in the crowd, after the first hour, to make a cankerous yeast. Their good nature and animal spirits struck me as remarkable. At the end of the first 20 miles I saw one missionary chase another, up a mountain side, at a dead run, for some practical joke that had been played. Perhaps the picture that I am drawing may not please some pious folk over the seas, who think that the missionary should be forever shedding tears over the benighted people to whom he has come, but for my part I thought it eminently sane and creditable, and really an argument for the fitness of the missionary.

A Twenty-Five Mile Tramp.

The men, all clergymen, were typical. I think, all except two, were in the 30s. The American board was represented by Hilton Pedley and E. S. Cobb, the Northern Methodist by A. D. Perry, E. T. Ighart and C. S. Davidson, and the Northern Presbyterian by Arthur P. Vaughn, A. K. Reischer and J. E. Hall, the last an ex-Cumberland Presbyterian. Two are the sons of missionaries, having lived in and despite practically all their lives, except when being educated in America.

The long tramp to Kusatsu was amid beautiful mountain scenery, past the famous active volcano Asama over the high park lands where are the imperial horse farms, at one point across a long suspension bridge made of telegraph wire, and through small native villages where still culture is carried on, until, under the shadow of Shirane, another active volcano, the sulphurous village of Kusatsu was reached at 6 o'clock in the evening. On the way many pilgrims were passed, some jiriki-like, some in a chair-like arrangement slung on a pole over the shoulders of two coolies, and some on pack saddles, often two persons to a horse, one in a pannier-like seat on either side.

The Preachers and the Police.

Soon the kindly paternalism of the Japanese police was encountered. Immediately upon reaching their inn, the foreigners had been obliged to register their names and ages and occupations, where they came from, whether they were going and how long they intended to stay. This is part of the marvellously complete system whereby the police department keeps a record of

every foreigner within the borders of the empire. Soon the Japanese teacher returned to say that the police, while quite willing that the visitors should hold a preaching service in the public square, advised that it be very short and simple, lest there be trouble with the rough element in town. Later, there came a second message, couched in polite terms, suggesting that the meeting be held in the hotel, where the honorable gentlemen lodged, at the upper end of the village.

So it was arranged. Shortly after 5 o'clock, lighted by the conventional paper lanterns which the inn supplied, we proceeded to the public square, alongside of a steaming pool whose sulphurous fumes suggested the "opposite of things heavenly." In fact, Kusatsu itself is a good place for preaching. Its very existence is based largely upon the consequences of immorality. The permanent population is about 1,500 persons, the living off the visitors, who number between 5,000 and 4,000, more than a score of whom are Europeans. These hot sulphur baths for centuries the most famous in Japan, while efficacious in rheumatism and gout, are more generally used for the most loathsome skin diseases. By far the largest number of visitors go to Kusatsu as a penalty for their own or their parents' transgression of the moral law.

Lepers and Bad Buddhists.

As I watched the people on the street and in the baths the next morning, I thought that the most appropriate scripture for that community—too appropriate, perhaps, for politeness—would be, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Even yet I cannot determine which was the sadder sight, the squads of decrepit old men in the baths, or the larger companies of youths. The very fact of the purpose for which these hot springs are used, and the further fact that the existence of the unnameable disease, both here and throughout Japan, is not even regarded as a reason for shame, would seem to argue the need for some new moral teachings. Certainly Buddhism offers no remedy; I learned at Kusatsu that next month is the time for the visit of the Buddhist priests who suffer from the malady most commonly treated at the springs. Evidently Buddhism as practiced in Japan is different from Buddhism as preached in Boston.

Old and New in Competition.

But to return to the party of missionaries, visitors in the center of the village. The simple presence of so many foreigners apparently in good health, attracted attention. When the older of the two Japanese preachers announced, holding aloft his lantern, that the foreigners would speak and sing that night, heads began to appear on all sides. Then the missionaries, all of whom speak Japanese, gathered about their own hymn book and began to sing a Japanese translation of a familiar hymn. In the meantime the native evangelist was busily accosting individuals, inviting them to the service and giving them tracts.

Fresh Sensation for the Jaded.

Curiosity, and the desire of the bias for a new sensation, was largely responsible for the attentive company of about 50 Japanese which gathered when the meeting opened. Outside the room,

THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP OF VIRGINIA



JEFFERSON MYERS AT LAKE DRUMMOND, GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

By Jefferson Myers.

DURING the course of a 42-mile drive to historic Yorktown and Jamestown in the cradle of the American nation, the latter of which places I visited by starlight, my imagination was stimulated regarding other points of interest in this wonderful old state of Virginia.

I had the extreme good fortune to make the trip under the guidance of Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, president of William and Mary college at Williamsburg, to whose father, white president of the United States, my native state of Oregon owes a great debt of gratitude.

As we passed through this beautiful and romantic country, the conversation turned on the great Dismal swamp of Virginia, and so interesting were the facts and anecdotes I heard concerning this weird and remarkable region that I felt that I could not be satisfied to return to my western home until I had seen some of its wonders with my own eyes. Accordingly, I eagerly accepted the invitation of A. L. Sutton, chief of the department of press and publicity at the Jamestown exposition, and his friend, Charles Frederick Stansbury, a well-known writer, to accompany them and a party of others on a two days' trip to Lake Drummond, in the heart of the Dismal swamp.

On a small yacht we left Norfolk at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of a perfect November day. The air was clear, bracing and balmy, and our craft cut swiftly through the waters of the south branch of the Elizabeth river. I observed that the water of the river was tinged with red to the bright hue of cherry, and its odor was due to the overflow from the juniper and cypress infusion that constitutes the waters of the swamp.

Past the Navy Yards.

We passed the Norfolk navy yard, where Dewey's flagship, the Olympia, the old unprotected cruiser San Francisco and the training-ships Richmond and Franklin were seen, surrounded by fleets of torpedo-boats and destroyers. We traversed the serpentine river called Deep creek and soon came to the lock at the town of Deep Creek, where the waters of the Dismal swamp connect with those of the Tidewater and Hampton Roads.

Here we were courteously received by J. B. Baxter, superintendent of the Lake Drummond Canal & Water company, and his assistant, A. F. Boynton, from whom we received valuable information regarding the Dismal swamp. Our boat had been raised in the lock to an elevation of about 12 or 14 feet above the level of the sea, and we were now in the waters of the Dismal swamp canal. When we left Deep Creek and our boat was plowing the dark waters of the

canal, I reflected that I was traversing the waterway surveyed by General George Washington, and going into a region part of which he owned, and in all of which he took a great interest. There is, in fact, a canal in the heart of the Dismal swamp, five miles long, known as the "Washington ditch," which is said to have been surveyed and cut under the direction of the "father of his country."

The Dismal Swamp Canal is 50 feet wide, and its banks were ornamented with luxuriant verdure, late as was the season. The canal is about 40 miles long, and connects Deep Creek, Virginia, with Elizabeth City, North Carolina, thus uniting the waters of the Chesapeake with those of Albemarle sound. It is of great commercial and industrial value and many thousands of vessels ply to and fro, the value of its produce, the principal cargoes, however, being lumber, pass through it annually. It cost many millions of dollars and very many years to complete; the value of it will become more evident as the years roll by.

About 12 miles below Deep Creek, we pass Wallacetown, a fertile 12,000-acre farm, wring from the morass by Captain John G. Wallace, the present owner and his father, a brave and intelligent pioneer of this region. A short distance below Wallacetown, we turned into the "Feeder," which runs into the canal at right angles, connecting it with Lake Drummond, four and a half miles away. As our yacht was far too large and heavy to be carried or lifted into the upper waters of the canal above, we had concluded to make our central camp at this point, and reach Lake Drummond and its inlets by means of small boats, some of which we carried with us and some of which we hoped to obtain from the quaint old lock keeper, "Captain Jack," a famous character of the swamp.

As evening was fast approaching, the bulk of our party decided to remain at the camp for the night, and make their observations and tours of inspection early on the following day, but having seen this much of the Dismal Swamp and the environs of Lake Drummond, my imagination had become so inflamed and my curiosity so excited that I determined, if possible, to pay a visit to the lake at night. Accordingly, I set



OLD LOCKS IN FEEDER CANAL, NEAR LAKE DRUMMOND, DISMAL SWAMP.

forth with a companion, armed with a shotgun and necessary fishing tackle, as a preparation for emergencies in case we should become stranded without provision, and in a small, flat bottom boat we rowed through the remaining half mile of the canal that connects the lock with Lake Drummond. The star light was sufficiently bright to show the wierd outlines of the strange trees that line the banks of the canal, while vague shadows of the forest behind, brought upon us a feeling that was almost uncanny. As we followed the entrance to Lake Drummond, its dark waters reflected everywhere the radiance of the stars, while the giant junipers and cypress trees and huge knarled trunks of what had once been giants of that order, loomed vaguely marvellously distorted.

Weird Forms on the Lake.

As we rode out upon the bosom of this dark lake, it required no effort of the imagination to conceive the reason why it has been peopled with strange forms by the poets who have written of it and why it has been given immor-

tal to two large lakes. One is of hydrochloric acid, and when diluted and sweetened makes lemonade, as the missionaries found. The other lake is filled with boiling, steaming sulphur. These young missionaries were not content with drinking from the lemonade lake; they even went swimming in it!

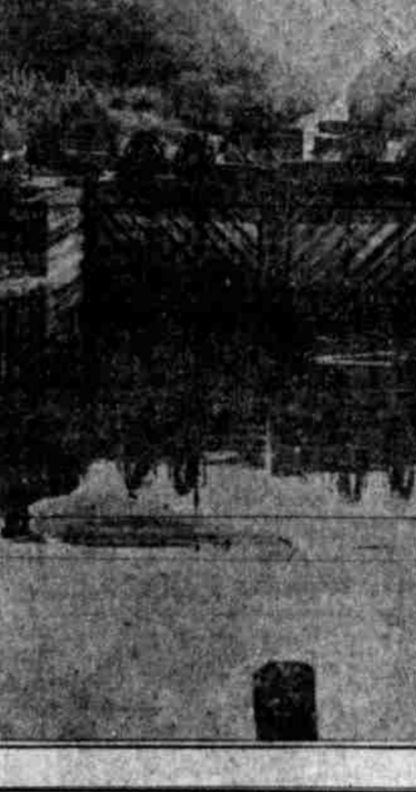
The Polite Police.

The faithful Japanese preacher had omitted the climb up Shirane and so he reached Shibu, another village famous for its milder baths, ahead of the main party of sunburned and footsore missionaries, who arrived at sundown, to find the town expectant of a meeting with their servants. After the address the men reached forth eagerly for the Japanese tracts and scripture portions that were given away, the policeman who had been deputized to attend the meeting being a delighted recipient of one. Several persons tarried to talk with the preachers.

Swimming in a Volcano.

Despite the lateness of the hour to which this meeting had been prolonged, the party was set aloft at daybreak, and on a tour of the town watching the bathers. Whoever will may see these, for the Japanese know nothing of the American interpretation of modesty. Then an early start was made for Shibu, more than 20 miles distant by way of Shirane, an active volcano 7,500 feet high. This tramp is enough to test the religion of anybody, even a missionary, for it is entirely over mountains, and the road is superlatively bad, though the scenery is superlatively beautiful, rivaling Colorado's best.

Shirane is a tall gray peak amidst a scene of desolation, caused by the eruption of 1882, which blasted the trees for miles around, so that now they stand like gray, gaunt skeletons haunting a field of death. The crater is most satisfactory to visit, in that one may descend its depths and play with the echoes which dwell in its walls or dig sulphur from the bottomless pit. Since the smaller eruption of 1902 the crater, which is 1,000 yards long, con-



JEFFERSON MYERS AND PARTY IN THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

tality by the famous ballad of "The Lake of the Dismal Swamp," written by Thomas Moore, after he had visited it in person more than a century ago.

At daylight next morning, we were astir, and I had the privilege of again entering Lake Drummond, as seeing the sun rise over its weird and picturesque beauty. I skirted the shores of the lake and journeyed into many of its inlets. In spite of the suggestion of desolation, the scene was one of constant and ever changing beauty. I found it impossible to accustom my mind to the fact that I was sailing on, and about a lake, the waters of which were blood red in color, and where even the spray thrown up by the wind was brown in hue.

While I was exploring the lake and the interior region of the swamp, my companions were enjoying themselves in various ways, some of them fishing in the lake, which, notwithstanding its strange, discolored, abounds in fish of many varieties. Owing to the fact that the season was not sufficiently advanced, we did not encounter any of the bear or deer or panther with which the region abounds later in the winter. We were not scrupulous to take ourselves with such small game as came our way, which fact, in addition to the fish, added materially to the variety of our cuisine. Later in the day, which had worn away rapidly, we returned to our rendezvous at the lake, where we observed for a time the labors of a gang of negroes, who were at work under the direction of the engineer in cutting a gigantic roadway, prior to the repairing of the lake. This work is being pushed in order that the many thousands of visitors to the Jamestown exposition next year, who may wish to see Lake Drummond, can visit it without breaking their journey or suffering any inconvenience.

Before starting for Norfolk, I secured a bottle of the Juniper water from the famous lake, which, for more than two centuries has been renowned for its medicinal and keeping qualities to such an extent that formerly ocean-going vessels did not scruple to take great trouble in order to obtain a supply of it for their long voyage.

Of the various and frightful things which the Dismal Swamp contains or is said to contain, I saw but little, as the season when venomous snakes and other reptiles are in evidence had passed.

Of the natural beauties of the Dismal Swamp, I cannot say too much. There is nothing like it elsewhere on the face of the globe. It stands alone, and should be enumerated among the great natural wonders of this great continent.

I have performed an early morning devotion at a certain shrine, and have received absolution from him in person—although, as a matter of fact, it was nearly noon when we were in the temple, and I never saw the high priest. I bought the document from a priest in the temple office for one and a half cents, which I have a brass charm from the imperial high priest, whom I did not meet, I am sorry to say, guaranteeing protection to my body from every kind of harm, and all for the sum of 5 cents. Religion comes cheap in Japan. I saw priests emptying the money boxes which stand before each shrine, and later stringing the coins together. There are all of copper, and of the lowest denominations, two sen, one sen, half sen, rin and half rin. The last two are the commonest, and are worth respectively, one twentieth and one fortieth of an American cent. These are now seldom used, in commerce and are called "temple money." The sen is worth one half cent.

The elaborate and costly Buddhist temple and its ritual and priests was in sharp contrast with the impoverished simple services which these unimproved missionaries had been holding; but the latter had a confidence and a vitality which made one foresee the possibility of the overthrow of Buddhism by the plain gospel of the Nazarene.

Right Side for the Heart.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Teacher—Johnnie, on which side is the heart?

Johnnie—On the right side, teacher.

Teacher—No, Johnnie, it's on your left side.

Johnnie—Yes, ma'am; that's what I said.

Teacher—What you said?

Johnnie—Yes, teacher; the left side is the right side for the heart.

Summer Is Over in the South.

From the Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser.

We suppose these cool mornings will cause the mosquitoes to "fold their tents" like Arabs and silently steal away, or words to that effect. The cold has its uses, besides enriching the coal dealers.



JEFFERSON MYERS AND PARTY IN THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

Where Religion Is Cheap.

The next morning the Americans, who were quite accustomed to creating a stir by their appearance in native villages, went to Nagano, where is one of the most celebrated Buddhist temples in

Japan, dating back to 670 A. D., although the oldest portion of the present structure is only six centuries old. The high priests of this temple is an aunt of the emperor. The temple area is crowded with statues and buildings of absorbing interest. I noticed one bronze Buddha of heroic size holding a baby, and some devotee had put a modern bonnet of cheap calico on the latter's head! On several occasions I have seen images thus incongruously adorned.

Thousands of devout pilgrims visit this temple, and the emperor himself has a sumptuous suite of apartments here, although the Shintoists claim him as one of their number. In fact, he has rather impartially patronized both faiths, and thousands of his subjects do likewise. Ordinary pilgrims to the temple are kept outside the wire screen before the altar, but the missionaries, by the application of the silver key which unlocks doors the world over, were permitted to a closer view and a complete inspection.

The Keys of Paradise.

They were even taken down through the absolutely dark underground passage where the keys of paradise may be found, attached to a huge padlock. And assuredly those young Americans found them, and rattled them loudly enough for all the celestial doorkeepers to hear. This trip in the dark is supposed to purge the soul of sin, though, paradoxically enough, the priest who was our guide warned us that if we had any sin in our hearts when we entered we would come out changed into dogs, which is the common belief. Or course this party emerged barking and growling like curs with tin cans to their tails.

It must not be inferred that the missionaries were disrespectful to the temple or its worshippers. They moved about, uncovered and unshod, and were genuinely interested in the bewildering explanations of whom who in this sect of Buddhism. Among the more than 30,000 ancestral tablets placed in one apartment, I noticed one that was surmounted by the Harvard H.

As souvenirs of this trip I have a written token from the high priest that