

MOUNTAINEERING IN THE JAPANESE ALPS.

BY WALTER WESTON, M.A., F.R.G.S., ENGLISH CHAPLAIN, KOBE.

'It is amid the giant heights which on three sides wall in the secluded province of Hida that the sublimest mountain scenery of Japan is to be found,' says Dixon in 'The Land of the Morning,' and anyone who has had opportunities of travelling amongst representative types of the scenery of Japan will fully endorse his statement. The present writer was first induced to turn his attention to these 'Japanese Alps,' as they well may be called, by an enthusiastic recommendation given two years ago by Professor Chamberlain, and the result was a perfect revelation of unexpected grandeur. Of all the provinces of Japan, Hida is the most remote and least known. Few travellers, either natives or foreigners, ever penetrated the vast solitudes of the mighty range which on the north and east cuts it off almost entirely from communication with the outer world. And yet nowhere in the bounds of the Land of the Rising Sun is there such a marvellous range, so wonderful and complete a variety of nature's beauties, to be met with. From the richness of sub-tropical vegetation, to Alpine snows, nothing is wanting. When the dark cone of Fuji has lost its snowy mantle these granite peaks and castellated cliffs still bear the glittering snow upon their steep sides, and more than one great river has its volume swelled by the waters which descend from their slopes of ever-wasting, never disappearing snow.

The easiest approach into these solitary wilds is from Matsumoto on the E., or from Gifu on the S., of the boundaries of Hida.

Last summer I took the former route, and it was from the top of the Hōfukuji-tōge, between Uyeda and Matsumoto, that I got my first view of ranges and peaks such as I had hardly believed Japan could boast of. Norikura with its saddle-like summit, Jōnen-dake with its beautiful triangular form—recalling the shape of the peerless Weiss-horn, queen of the Pennine Alps—and, above all, the sharp peak of Yari-gatake, the Matterhorn of Japan, in all its naked grandeur—these and countless other heights, seen across the broad plain of Matsumoto, combined to form a picture which can never fade from memory, and ever will remain one of its choicest possessions.

On that occasion a week spent in an expedition to Yari-gatake, second in height to Fuji itself, was less productive than one had hoped, through bad weather. After two nights away from our inn at Shimajima, and the exploration of a new route to the foot of the final peak—the 'Spear' (*yari*) of the mountain—we were driven back when half an hour of good weather would have landed us on the summit. Rain, however, made the rocks in a dangerous condition for climbing, and ten hours of hard work, with little food all day, had brought us too late to the last stage of the ascent. So we were compelled to accept the inevitable and turn our backs on our peak, not without one of us, at any rate, vowing vengeance upon him, and determining to return another year and plant an iron heel upon the giant's head.

It was with this end, amongst others, in view that on August 1 last my friend, Dr. Miller, of Kobe, and myself left by the 9.2 A.M. train for Gifu. Our plan was to make our way into Hida from the S., and then work round to the mountains from their western side, eventually crossing the range into Shinshiu, our objective point there being the town of Matsumoto.

How far our plans succeeded I have now to tell. The journey along the Tōkaidō railway is too well known to need description, but I may mention in passing that in clear weather one can get a glimpse of the snow-streaked summits of both Hakusan in Kaga, and Ontake in Hida-Shinshiu, if careful watch is kept when passing through the station of Ogaki. Last November I had enchanting views of the then snow-crowned peaks, but often the summer haze prevents them from being visible. Hakusan is nearly N. and Ontake N.E. From Gifu to Seki, our first night's stopping-place on the road to Takayama (the capital of Hida), is a distance of about $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The first part of the road, the Hida-kaido, is very good, but later on it becomes bad beyond expression, and after a trudge of 4 hrs. we arrived at Seki at 8.30 P.M. Here we found excellent accommodation at the 'Yorozuya,' additional attention being shown when the fact of my companion's therapeutic powers became known. For our landlord brought in a friend who was ill for examination, and as a token of gratitude for assistance given presented each of us with a pretty little fan, and to the doctor he also gave a very neat stiletto. Some difficulty was experienced in getting *kurumas* here at anything like a reasonable rate, the reason advanced being that of the unusually bad state of the road to Takayama, and so the bargaining lasted long into the night before an agreement was reached.

As the next day's journey took us only a distance of $32\frac{1}{2}$ miles, it will be at once seen that there must have been something rather rough about the road we passed over. With two men to each *jinrikisha* we were off at 6.30 A.M., a lovely morning greeting us as we said our good-byes and turned our faces towards Takayama. For the first seven miles or so the road thither fully bore out the bad character it had been given, but then comes a remarkable change, the next 15 miles (the portion between Tonomura and Kanayama) being almost fit for a bicycle track nearly all the way, although the latter part is somewhat hilly. On nearing Kanayama the character of the scenery alters, growing grander as the mild hills and valleys of Mino are left behind and we draw near to ragged cliffs which wall in the swift-flowing waters of the Hida-gawa.

Just outside this village is one of the most picturesque spots on the whole of the route. It is here that the Mazegawa, one of the most important tributaries of this river, comes in to swell the volume of the stream, and at the angle formed by the two a view is presented which will not readily be forgotten by those who once behold it. From Kanayama right on to Kukuno, a distance of nearly 40 miles, the road follows the course of the Hida-gawa, whose well-wooded valleys and rocky ravines furnish a constant succession of scenes of varying beauty. Just after passing Shimohara, a neat village a mile or so beyond

Kanayama, a picturesque temple at the foot of a magnificent grove of dark cryptomeria on the left attracts one's attention, but along the whole route it is the hand of Nature, rather than that of man, which furnishes us with a never-ceasing source of wonder and delight. At one time we are passing almost within reach of the stream, at another the road winds along the edge of a precipice of 500 feet or so above, wooded from its summit to the water's edge.

Beyond Shimohara the scenery is particularly striking, affording a lovely view of pine-clad islets, rising from the rapids of the torrent bed.

We decide to stop the night at Hoido, our resting-place being an unpretentious inn on the outskirts of the little village that consists merely of a few scattered houses dotted here and there over a part of the valley rather more open than that through which we have just been making our way.

On the following day we found abundant cause to congratulate ourselves on our decision.

The road is for some distance cut in the rocky face of the precipices which overhang the river on our left. Heavy rains have in some places washed the thin layer of soil almost entirely away from the rocks beneath, and it is hard work for the *jinrikisha* to get along. Having hoped to gain time on the way from Seki to Sakayama by taking them, it was somewhat of a disappointment to find them so useless. But there was no help for it, and our thoughts could not but turn with never ending delight to the fresh beauties that opened out on either hand.

Curiously enough, the most beautiful part of the route has been given the most unbecoming name of *Jigoku* (Hell), apparently by reason of the fearsome aspect it presents to the beholder.

After a hard pull for some five or six miles beyond Hoido the road begins to improve, and a fine view greets us as the river makes a sudden bend and passes under a picturesque bridge at the point where a branch road turns off to the Nakasendo.

Near Gero the road loses itself in the boulders of the bed of a torrent which here dashes into the Hida-gawa on the right, and after heavy rains some difficulty must be experienced in getting *kurumas* across. Further on, at Osaka, we reach the loveliest of all the many beautiful scenes with which this route abounds. The village stands at the angle formed by the confluence of the Hida-gawa with the Osaka-gawa, and the sight of the wild waters of the tributary torrent as it comes rushing down a ravine on the right, combined with the stern ruggedness of the cliffs which rise up on the left, all unite to form a picture of entrancing beauty.

This, indeed, forms a fitting climax to the constant succession of charming views through which we have been passing for a day and a half, and the rest of the route is almost tame by comparison.

Another ten miles and we are at Kukuno, where for the present we say good-bye to the great stream which has afforded us such a constant source of pleasure, whilst it has been our companion—though always a passer-by—during so many miles. Its name, however, is a little puzzling, as it varies from time to time like that of most of the more

important rivers of Japan, according to the locality through which it passes.

For instance, that given at its birth from the deep emerald waters of the tarn O-ike on Norikura, whence it springs, is Adanogō-gawa. As it grows older and bigger, further on between Kukuno and Osaka, its name is changed to Masuda-gawa; whilst curiously enough it is not until it leaves its native province of Hida and passes into that of Mino that it assumes the title by which it is best known of the Hida-gawa. Near Ota, on the Nakasendō, it ceases to have any individuality, its waters being merged in those of the broad swift-flowing Kisogawa, whose delta embraces the broad plain at the head of Owari Bay.

From Kukuno a path follows the course of the river for seven miles as far as the village of Miza on the Nomugi Tōge from Takayama to Matsumoto, and would save a considerable distance to those who were not desirous of going on to Takayama before crossing that pass.

Leaving our *jinrikishas* here—with the exception of the one containing our baggage—we applied ourselves to the crossing of the Miya-tōge, over which a remarkably good road leads, for a distance of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles, to Takayama. The summit of the pass is reached by a gentle ascent of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile, and on attaining it a fine view of the hills on the west of Takayama is obtained. The descent from the top of the pass as far as the village and temple of Miya—the latter really giving the name to the former—is effected by a remarkable series of zigzags, the serpentine windings of this road being very cleverly arranged. It is only 24 *cho* from the top to the temple, which stands on the right-hand side of the path in the shade of a fine grove of stately cryptomerias. This is the principal Shinto temple in the whole province of Hida, and is said to have been founded in prehistoric times, though the present buildings are comparatively of a recent date. The situation is very fine, and though the buildings are of the simplest character there is a solemn stateliness which is very impressive. Passing on from here we soon cross the river Miyagawa, and our route for a short distance follows its valley, at length coming out into the small plain in which stands the town of Takayama, the capital of the province of Hida, with a population of a little over 15,000. Here we put up at a very comfortable inn, the Tanekaya, whose landlord, from the time he sent out a servant with a lantern to meet us on our entrance into the town, until the moment when he said a polite farewell the next morning, showed us a courtesy and attentiveness which are always most noticeable when *not* on the beaten tracks in Japan.

It was a surprise to find, on making inquiries here, that it was possible to take *kurumas* for some distance, and so save time, along the way eastwards to Hirayu, the place we had fixed upon as the basis of our operations upon the Western side of the 'Alps of Japan.'

Accordingly our spirits rose as, on the next morning, we found ourselves early bowling along the road which passes out at the north-east corner of the town in the direction of the great peaks with which we were eager to make a nearer acquaintance. Perhaps the loveliest part of this charming route is that just beyond the little hamlet of Odani, some six miles out from Takayama. Here the Niūgawa, with

its dark impetuous rapids crossed at intervals by picturesque little bridges, dashes down the narrow defile between the richly wooded cliffs from its birthplace in a deep emerald lake—the Oniü-ike—which afterwards we looked down upon when climbing the higher ridges of Norikura. It is one of the summits of this peak which we now catch sight of rising far above its neighbouring satellites.

About ten miles from Takayama a neat wayside temple is passed on the left, close to the hamlet of Hiomo. It was here, as we turned to look down the valley up which we had just come, that a view, as striking as it was unexpected, met our gaze. There, sixty miles away, as the crow flies, forming an exquisite vignette in an angle of the nearer hills, rises the massive cone of Hakusan, the great 'white mountain' of Kaga. Its precipitous sides, 'scarred with a thousand wintry watercourses' and picked out here and there with glistening slopes of snow, are sharply defined against the blue vault of heaven. There is no intervening plain to catch the eye, only the forest-clad hills in the immediate foreground, and then this grand far-off peak rising up in the angle they make as their outlines meet. The contrast between the near glorious greenery of trees of every shade and the distant grey and purple and white of this great pyramid, standing solitary in the clear atmosphere of a perfect summer's day, was indescribably beautiful. It was a happy inspiration that prompted us to stop just at that spot to take some observations, and in doing so, to turn round and see this lovely picture spread out before us.

In a little less than 4 hrs. from the start our *kurumas* come to a full stop, the road itself almost doing the same, or at any rate dwindling down to a narrow track which crosses the foot hills of the great chain and leads to the little village of Hirayu. It is about 11 o'clock when we reach Hatahoko, and here the *jinrikishas*, for which there is no further use, are sent back, and arrangements have to be made for transporting our baggage over the pass, commonly known hereabouts as the Hirayu-toge. This is no easy task, for we are completely in the hands of the house at which we stopped and unburdened the *kurumas*, and as this gentleman knows full well that he has us at his mercy, his demands are proportionately exorbitant. However, we had determined not to yield, and as he was in an equally obstinate state of mind, there seemed to be every prospect of a dead-lock. We had plenty of time to wait, as the pass would only take about 4 hrs. to cross, so we left him to reflect until he should arrive at a better and more reasonable frame of mind. In the meantime we fell to on our midday meal, and somehow or another the fact of the therapeutic powers of my companion leaked out with astonishing results. For within about half an hour not only had a large proportion of the inhabitants of the village received medical attention 'free of charge,' but our crusty friend had so far softened as to provide us with the help we wanted at a comparatively reasonable rate. It is, however, well to bear in mind on such occasions as these that as the peasants in mountainous valleys usually turn out to their work at an early hour there is always a scarcity of coolies available for transport purposes, and consequently if a

man is to be induced to leave his day's work and go off elsewhere he generally expects to be well paid for doing so.

It was just midday when we left Hatahoko, which, by the way, is well situated at the head of the valley through which we have come.

In front of us the valley divides, the left branch going up into the hills which rise between us and Hirayu, and the right penetrating far into the massive flanks of Norikura, the first of the giants of the range to which our attention is to be given. High up this valley lies the lovely little lake in which rises the Niūgawa, one of the tributaries of the Miyagawa, this again forming one of the principal feeders of the Jindzu-gawa, well known to the Japanese as almost the greatest of the swift streams that empty themselves into the Sea of Japan.

It is possible, by following a track which winds up the lovely defile towards the lake, to make the ascent of Norikura, but as we had decided to make Hirayu our headquarters we left this route untried, and set out with our two porters for that place *vid* the Hirayu-tōge. The path winds steeply up the valley to the left, for awhile near a mountain torrent of the usual noisy sort. By-and-by, however, we lose its companionship, and after passing a group of cottages, collectively known as Kute, we find ourselves at last out of the reach of human habitations, save here and there a solitary charcoal-burner's hut situated in an open space cleared out of the dense forest of firs, beeches, oaks, and other trees.

In a little over 2½ hrs. we arrive at the top of the ridge, on the other side of which, close by the summit, we find a hut tenanted only by a few more or less dilapidated stone images of Buddha. A short rest here, and down we plunge into a hollow at the bottom of which lies the little village of Hirayu, which, however, is at first hidden by an intervening slope of the steep hill side we are descending. On the way down we get good views of Norikura a little to the right, and lesser heights in front and on the left. A descent of less than an hour and we are standing at the hospitable door of Yomosaburo, and very soon afterwards we are sitting up to our necks in the hot mineral-water bath close by. These waters—impregnated with iron—are conducted from the spot at which they rise into several bath houses in the village, by means of bamboo pipes, but as the temperature is originally some 190°, other pipes bring in a supply of cold water as well, in order to make it possible to bathe without being parboiled. The spring leaves the ground about 100 ft. from the bath house furthest up the village from the inn. During the evening we had a visit from another occupant of the house, by name Mr. Kumagaye, an official in the Kanagawa department of the Agricultural Board, who was making a report on the botany and geology of this district. He showed us some interesting sketch maps of various sections of the neighbouring mountains, which were of assistance to us in settling our route when next day we set out for our first mountaineering expedition, the first ascent of Norikura from the N.W.

In order to do this it was necessary to spend the night somewhere on the mountain, so the next morning after our arrival at Hirayu was chiefly spent in getting information on the subject and making the necessary preparations for our climb.

As a result of our inquiries we found that it would be possible to sleep at the huts of the workmen employed at a mine situated in the hills some 4 or 5 miles from Hirayu, and from here we might be able to find some practicable route to the top of our peak. Accordingly, having secured the services of a couple of coolies overnight, we set off at 2.15 p.m., and left the village by a path to the S.E., which brought us, in a quarter of an hour, to the works where the copper from the mine I have mentioned is smelted, and, passing this, the ascent soon leads up a valley down which comes dashing the torrent of the Takahara-gawa. This eventually joins the Miyagawa on the N.W. corner of the boundary of the provinces of Hida and Etchū, that river then flowing into the Jindzu-gawa, as I have already mentioned.

A steep pull for a mile or so brings us to a point just above a magnificent cascade, formed by the Takahara-gawa near its source, which falls with a thunderous roar into a rocky basin more than 200 ft. below. It was difficult to realise that this was the same as the slender silvery thread, to all appearance as light and soft as silken ribbon when seen from the village not two miles away.

In two hours from the start we found ourselves at the end of the path, and at the entrance of the little mining settlement of which we had been told. This consists of one or two long low lines of huts built on the steep hillside in which the mines are excavated. Outside the front of the huts runs a sort of gallery or covered-in verandah, for the miners stay on here all the year round, and judging by the summer temperature as we found it, the winter cold must be intense enough to make a good deal of protection necessary. On making as polite an application as we could—for we were alone, our porters not having yet arrived—we received a most hospitable welcome, and on accepting the kindly invitation to enter, we found ourselves in a comfortable little room, quite as cosy at least as the one in which we had spent the previous night. This, we discovered, was the office of the overseer of the mines, and served him and some of his subordinates also, for the purpose not only of office, but of dining and bedroom as well. By-and-by, our coolies arrived with the baggage, and we immediately set to work making ourselves snug for the night. First, however, came the evening meal, and here we fared regally, being supplied by our host with a liberal quantity of octopus and sweet potatoes fried in oil, an addition to our own provisions of such an appetising character that the latter were really hardly needed.

Before turning in, we had a chat with our new friends about our surroundings. The mines, they told us, had only been working some three or four years, the quantity of copper produced being about 150,000 pounds, and that of silver 2,500 pounds annually. A similar mine was formerly worked on the east slope of this northern spur of Norikura, and traces of the old buildings, furnaces &c. are still to be seen in the neighbourhood of Onogawa, on the Shinshū side. But for thirty years or so operations have been suspended, and the works are now deserted.

The miners at Kōzan here carry on their vocation all the year

round, and as the mine is at an altitude of nearly 7,000 feet, in a somewhat exposed position, the cold in winter must be intense. The path up from Hirayu is, of course, buried deep under the snow, and as the ordinary *waraji* are unsuited for snow-walking, recourse is had to foot gear specially adapted to it. For hard snow a sort of *crampon* called *kana-kanjiki* is used, consisting of a flat metal band with three iron points.

When, however, the consistency of the snow will not admit of these being used, a light frame of bamboo, like a Canadian snowshoe without the interior netting, allows the walker to tread in safety over the deepest snow-drifts. About one hundred and fifty labourers, of all ages, are employed, most of them being housed at night in huge dormitories in the same buildings we ourselves were occupying. This last fact, however, had its drawbacks for us, for just as we were thinking of going to *futon*, a commotion in the dormitory next to our room announced the arrival of an itinerant story-teller and his assistant *samisen* player. The workmen being unable to get down to the lowlands for their amusement, those who cater for it have to do as Mahomet did to the mountain, and unluckily for us, on this occasion selected a most inopportune evening. It was hardly to be expected that when once the miners had got their mountebanks they would let them go without getting their money's worth, and as none like the Japanese so thoroughly make a business of their pleasure, this performance went on until midnight. The result was that our start the next morning did not take place until 6.30, but at that hour we found ourselves on the way. At first the coolies hesitated a good deal. 'The weather was not fit,' they said, 'it would be very dangerous—we might get benighted,' and so forth. However, no notice was taken of their objections, and additional moral support came to us in the shape of a cheery old fellow who arrived at Kozan just before we started, he having come up from Hirayu that morning in order to accompany us, and so learn the way with a view to himself hereafter becoming pilot to any stray traveller who might want to follow us on this climb. He proved to be a person of surprising activity of body, and no less astonishing cheerfulness of mind, and his presence was a help to us by raising the spirits of our porters.

Our ascent began by our going down several hundred feet on a steep shale slope just below the huts, this being necessary in order to allow us to cross the torrent and get up the precipitous bank beyond at a practicable point.

Rain was falling as we got to work, and continued to do so until we got clear of the forest through which we now had to make our way. This was, on the whole, the most trying part of the climb. Hidden tree-stumps in the long grass lay ready to trip up the unwary one, and while attention was being given to these, an unseen branch above would be ready to catch the head. The least shake given to bush or bough brought down an impromptu shower-bath, and slippery grass brought down the climber himself. For nearly an hour this continued, and more than once the coolies wanted to give in and turn back. However, we managed to make them hold on, and at length we

emerged from the forest, having rounded the spur which is thrown out between the torrent below Kozan and the one for which we were aiming and up which we wanted to climb. The altitude of Kozan is about 7,361 ft., according to a comparison of observations by aneroid and boiling-point thermometer made the day before; but our hour's work had brought us very little above this, and it was not until after passing an awkward place which slopes down to the point at which we crossed the second torrent-bed, that our ascent really began.

Far off on the right the lowest snow-bed showed up dull and cheerless in the cold rain, at about 200 ft. below us; but not until after a good scramble up the boulders and rocky sides of the torrent—now nearly empty of its usual stream—did we actually come into contact with snow. The rain now soon ceased, and after a halt for breakfast we again pushed on. We now turned southwards to a ridge on our left, and, on overtopping this, found ourselves looking down on the lake, Oniü-ike, at the head of the Hatahoko valley, from which, as I pointed out before, the Miyagawa receives a tributary, the Niügawa, in the plain of Takayama. Northwards, the view takes in all the great peaks of the Hida chain, Yarigatake, Kasadake, and many peaks of which we could not discover the names. Grand and precipitous are these granite giants of the Japanese Alps, and the cloud curtains that veiled their lower slopes only served to heighten the appearance of their grandeur. Descending the further side of the sharp ridge we are on, and passing over a steep slope clothed with the low spreading branches of the spiky *haimatsu*, we reach a long snow-slope, inclined at a moderate angle and ending in a saddle, on the other side of which is a clear lake of no great depth, surrounded on nearly all sides by rugged peaks and ridges that form a striking natural amphitheatre. At the foot of one of the most broken of the ridges some natural caves are formed, and in one of these, at an altitude of 8,820 ft., we sheltered from the wind and proceeded to fortify the inner man. After rest and refreshment came another scramble over a still steeper rocky crest, and then another gradual descent through a long stretch of *haimatsu*, which eventually landed us, at 11.30, at a hut built here for the benefit of those who ascend the mountain by the route from Onogawa on the Shinshu side. Leaving this—the Murodō, as it is called—without delay, we made for the steep slopes in front, and a short climb landed us on the sharp arête which runs down from the double-topped summit of the mountain, and evidently forms part of the lip of the crater, for Norikura is an extinct volcano. Shortly after noon we were standing on the northernmost of the two peaks, the highest point of the mountain, the altitude of which, according to the Japanese Geological Survey map, is 10,387 ft. I think this is too high, our own calculations giving 10,150 ft. as the result of the comparison of a number of aneroid and boiling-point observations.

Owing to clouds, the distant view was very limited, though once we caught sight of the mighty serrated ridge of Ontake, next to Fuji the most elevated of all the sacred mountains, on whose summit I was standing exactly a year ago.

This lies a little to the W. of South, and in the same direction,

though only just at the base of the great ridge on whose topmost point we stood, lay the beautiful lake of O-ike, whose waters form the source of the Adanogo-gawa, the name borne by the upper part of the Masudagawa, itself again known as the Hida-gawa when entering the province of Mino on its way to join the great Kisogawa, as I have mentioned, near Ota on the Nakasendō.

A rest of half an hour is enough, and then comes the descent. A stop for lunch at the lake we had passed on our way up; another halt while the preserver of lives spent much energy in frantic but futile efforts to take that of a ptarmigan which had a provoking way of stopping until nearly within reach, and then darting into the low level clumps of *haimatsu* that formed its shelter; ups and downs along our track of the morning, and we are once more at the head of the torrent bed which had given us a pleasant climb on the ascent. But going down was no more pleasant than that of the steepest moraine of an Alpine glacier, and it was here that the *waraji* (straw sandals) of the coolie had a great advantage over our hob-nailed boots, the former giving a much better hold on the slippery smooth boulders down which we had to make our way. But even this was not so trying as the passage of the forest-covered spur of which we cherished anything but the pleasantest recollections. On emerging from this we found that it had been left at the wrong point, and some time was lost in descending to one where the torrent could be crossed.

It was now raining steadily, and, after scrambling hard up the shale slopes to the huts of Kozan, we lost no time in gathering together the things we had left there in the morning, and, after a hearty farewell to our hospitable friends—whose first guests we had been—we applied ourselves with all speed to the descent. This took just $1\frac{1}{4}$ hr., the path being now in very bad condition through the wet, and it was 6.45 as we, and the darkness with us, came down on Hirayu once more.

Having successfully carried out our designs upon Norikura, we next turned our attention to the question of the ascent of a splendid rocky peak whose grey cliffs and shining snow-slopes form such a striking picture as we look down the narrow valley to the N.W. of the village.

Its name, Kasa-dake, is known to few but those who live within its neighbourhood, for even travellers whose journeyings have taken them off the usual beaten tracks would rarely catch sight of it except when in the remotest parts of the secluded province. On making inquiries we were told that the ascent could possibly be made from a lateral valley which runs to the N.E. from that in which Hirayu lies, and also that from the same locality we should be able to cross over the main chain of Hida from west to east and so reach Matsumoto by a short cut, though, doubtless, a very rough one. It is true, that no one had ever been known to do either the one expedition or the other, but still we should be able, they told us, to accomplish both if only we proceeded to a certain place called Gamada in the valley above mentioned. There we should get information, guides, and all that we wanted, including hot mineral baths free of charge. But we were doomed to disappointment.

At 11.30 we left Hirayu and made our way down the close stuffy defile which forms the only natural way out of the basin in which that

village lies, and after a descent of some 1,200 ft. as far as the hamlet of Hitoegane, we turned to the right and crossed an extremely steep ridge into the valley up which the path to Gamada leads. After descending on the other side of the ridge, the broad stony bed of a stream which flows into the Takakara-gawa is crossed by a curious long log bridge which is anchored fore and aft in the oddest manner to a great heap of rocks on the one side and the bank on the other. Safely over this, we turned to the right, and, after a walk of $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Hirayu, Gamada is reached at 2.30. On making known our object to the old gentleman to whose care we had been recommended, one Jimbei something or other, he at once cast a wet blanket on our hopes by pronouncing the expedition impossible. However, he said he would make inquiries, and let us know later on. In the meantime, we went to solace ourselves in the mineral baths, of which we had heard at Hirayu, and this over we took a stroll up the village path to a point where, from a hole in the bank of the torrent and close to its surface, a column of steam was seen escaping. The phenomenon was a very curious one, but we were unable to get across to investigate it. In the evening our host had a consultation with the head man of the village on our behalf, the result of which was that our expedition had to be abandoned, at least for the present. The rivers had burst their banks, bridges washed away, and worst of all, nobody was willing, or at any rate able, to accompany us.

So the next morning by ten o'clock we were back in Hirayu, and on the following day, shortly after 6 A.M., we were leaving there for the passage of the Abō tōge, the highest and least frequented, though shortest, of the passes leading over the mountains from Hida into Shinshū.

Probably no walk of 25 miles is to be found in the whole of Japan to surpass, if even to equal, this one from Hirayu to Shimajima (also called Hashiba) by way of Onogawa.

For some distance the narrow path leads up a steep ascent, whilst now and then care is needed where one has to cross the remains of a landslip in whose downward course great firs have been uprooted and snapped in twain like mere matchwood.

But no difficulties are met with at a single point, and the grateful shade of the glorious forest, all solemn and still except for an occasional song-bird—perhaps a sort of nightingale—or for the voice of a distant torrent, gives one a sense of quiet and restfulness beyond description.

Long will that day's walk live in our memories as one of the most repaying, in every sense, that we ever had.

For some time no view but that of the dark slopes on the opposite side of the valley we were ascending was gained, but after crossing the head of the pass (6,400 feet) and winding round the hillside to the right, a glorious view of the snow-streaked flanks and precipitous ridges of Kasa-ga-dake burst upon us and irresistibly compelled us to halt and gaze in silent adoration.

Very striking was the contrast between its grey ruggedness and the soft outlines of the other densely wooded hills whose flanks as yet are

untrodden by the woodman and whose timber has not yet begun to fall before his destroying axe.

But one cannot linger long, for there is still so much ground to be covered before our journey's end is reached. At the top of the pass we have crossed from Hida into Shinshu, and by-and-by the surroundings for a time are less striking.

At length, far down on the right, we see the steam rising up from the valley in which the hot springs of Shirahone lie, and then the strong broad current of the stream has to be crossed by means of a couple of long thin pine trees laid across. It isn't the nicest kind of bridge to those not possessed of the balancing powers of a Blondin, and great is the relief to be safely landed on the other side. For to feel the slippery pole bending and swaying at every movement of the body, whilst all the while the flashing waters as they rush below in swirling eddies dazzle one's eyes in the most distracting manner—this is somewhat trying, though doubtless it does afford an opportunity of asserting the power of the will as opposed to that of the imagination and the fears thereby inspired.

An hour before Onogawa is reached, a stiff ascent for a short distance brings us to the top of another pass—the Hinoki-toge—and as our porters are now far behind, and with them our food, we stop at a little wayside *chaya*, of the most modest kind, for refreshment.

Little, however, is to be had that is eatable, though we are certainly too hungry to stick at trifles. Dried peas, we have heard, are very sustaining, and perhaps the aged person in charge has learnt this fact, for of these she has a bountiful supply, and with them we proceed to appease the pangs of hunger. But Onogawa is now only some three miles away, and, pushing on again, by 2 P.M. we are at the comfortable inn kept by Okuta Kiichi, picturesquely situated on the banks of the Mayegawa, in whose cool clear stream we soon enjoy a most delicious and refreshing bath. A long wait was necessitated here by the late arrival of the baggage, and it was not until 3.30 that we got off again. But the interval was pleasantly enough filled up by welcome repast on fresh trout, cakes, and tea, served with the most charming attention on the part of our host and his wife, the former of whom to his occupation of innkeeper adds that of a subordinate official in the Agricultural Department, in witness whereof his bottle-green uniform hung in a conspicuous place on the little verandah near our room. His courtesy received a reward in the shape of a diagnosis of a sickness he was troubled with and a prescription for the same, with which attention he in turn was highly delighted. Happily for his guests, his gratitude, unlike that which may be too often described as a lively sense of favours to come, took a practical form, and, by the time our Hirayu coolies had arrived, there were, thanks to his kind offices, already waiting a fresh trio to take their place, and so well did they work that day that we were bound to admit we had not yet met with such a sturdy set of porters since we began our tour.

The first part of the way from Onogawa led over a new road on the left bank of the Mayegawa, but judging by the landslides, which here and there had completely carried it away, it would seem to have

been rather unwisely planned. In such spots as these the passage over the gaps in the precipitous hillsides were made over slender fir-poles, supported, somewhat insecurely, on struts of timber from below.

But this only served to make the journey more interesting, and when the corner was turned, where on the left the Adzusa-gawa receives the waters of the Mayegawa, the scene became inexpressibly beautiful. For the next eight or nine miles the walk takes one through a great ravine, whose sides rise up so abruptly from the water's edge, that it almost seems as if it is too difficult for the road to keep its hold, and out of sheer despair it has in more places than one tumbled bodily into the river 100 ft. below. These broken spots demanded a good deal of care, and one in particular will be long remembered as giving us as good a bit of climbing as we had on our travels. The road here had not been cut into the living rock, but built up round its smooth perpendicular face, and as no foothold was to be had, the pathway having vanished, it was necessary to scale the face of the cliff at an earlier point, and then, crossing over to another point above the road beyond the gap, to descend to the path once more. The passage was not a long one, and with the aid of an ice-axe and a strong line we had with us it was safely negotiated. But the experience was as exhilarating as it was unexpected, and sufficiently diverted our attention for the time being to enable us to resume our delighted contemplation of the glorious scenery about us with increased zest. High up on the left a curious 'water-slide,' so to speak, comes over the black rocks to join the emerald stream below. It is neither a cataract nor a torrent, for the water seems to *glide*, rather than rush or fall, over the face of the nearly perpendicular cliff, whilst the effect produced is similar to that noticed in the case of the great stone basin in the precincts of the temple of Iemitsu at Nikko. For there the edges of the basin are so finely chiselled that the water flows out on all sides with the most wonderful evenness.

It is between Onogawa and Mekoki that the perfection of the marvellous loveliness of this grand route is to be found, and so high and steep do the sides of the valley rise that it was already getting dusk when the latter village was reached at six o'clock, and by the time we had finished the slight repast we stopped for a little while to take, the shades of evening had closed in and the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles on to Shimajima were accomplished by lantern-light. How stony the path always seems that has thus to be traversed by the traveller belated! What boulders and holes are then discovered, which pass almost unnoticed in the broad light of day, when once the yellow rays of the swinging *chōchin* begin to cast the shadow which sunbeams never make. And as we trudge doggedly on we long for something to break the monotony of the tramp, each step of which, but for an occasional stumble, is exactly like the last and will be like the next, seeming to bring us no nearer home. On this occasion, however, our monotony was broken at one point in a manner nearly as disagreeable as unlooked for.

The diversion we met with was in the sudden appearance of a vicious horse who, at the sight of our lanterns, as we turned a corner

in the road, became exceedingly restive and began to charge in our direction so violently that escape was sought in instant and ungraceful flight up the steep bank on our right hand, the only other alternative being a headlong downfall over that on the left, a result involving not merely breaking the monotony of our walk, but a good deal more besides.

But Shimajima at length is near; already the lights are seen shining like glowworms in the darkness of the still valley on the opposite side of the river; the path takes a turn sharp to the right, and a sudden plunge down to the massive wooden bridge; then a few steps up the steep and stony ascent to the entrance of the village and here is the Shimidzuya once more, whose hospitable walls last year gave us shelter when bent on the same expedition as that which has brought us here to-day.

Then comes the ever-welcome bath—a substantial meal, and we are ready for a council of war with one of the three bear-hunters who twelve months ago piloted me to Yari-ga-take. One of them, he tells me, is dead, but he himself and his two brothers will be glad to come and help us to complete this time what then so narrowly failed of success.

AN ATTEMPT ON THE JUNGFRAU IN 1851.

[The following account, which Mr. C. A. Baumgartner kindly gives us permission to publish, of an attempt made by himself and a companion, with some Grindelwald guides, to reach the summit of the Jungfrau in 1851, forms an interesting chapter in the early history of Alpinism, all the more so that it was originally written as a diary-letter to the late Sir F. Adams. At the time when the attempt was made there had been no ascent of the Jungfrau for ten years, and none from Grindelwald since that made by Rohrdorf's guides in 1828.* Mr. Baumgartner and his companion seem to have laid siege to the mountain with great determination. On August 28 they went to the Zäsenberg Alp, removing two days later to the Stieregg, which, with the exception of two or three days spent in an excursion over the Strahlegg, remained their abode till September 13. At this point we take up the diary.]

September 13.—We turned out at 1 A.M., took a light breakfast, and, having got together all the requisites for the expedition, we started at 2.30 A.M. for the Jungfrau.

We had abandoned the plan of sleeping in the Kalli Höhle (much against my wish), because Christian Michel said it would be so terribly cold that we should be half frozen.

Our party consisted of B— and myself and the three guides—viz. Christian and Peter Michel and Christian Almer—all hardy and active mountaineers and chamois hunters. They are the best of the Grindelwalders, and the Grindelwalders are inferior to none in Switzerland. Of these the best is Christian Michel. He was the leader in all places of peril or difficulty in crossing the Strahleck. Almer also this day worked like a trump and a Trojan.

Our course was at first over the Eismeer, which we crossed: then a

* *Ueber Eis und Schnee*, vol. i. p. 110.