



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 10:09:19

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You are in the northeastern part of the city; the Imperial University, the Art School, the Zoological Museum and a number of other educational institutions are in this district. This part of the park is a favorite place for schoolboys' games. You see the native teacher wears European clothes, and at least the caps of these struggling, hard-hitting youngsters are of European cut, but the spirit and energy with which they are playing did not have to be imported from the west! Not one of these boys but knows by heart stories of Japanese loyalty and heroism that stir his blood. It is not without effect that their ancestors, generation after generation, were taught the nobility of self-sacrifice for a beloved superior of a great idea.

Just at present these are merely jolly youngsters whose hardships consist only of severe demands by their school. They work much harder than English or American boys. Besides learning to read and write their own immensely difficult language (that means memorizing and learning to draw with brush and ink, several thousand word-signs), learning Japanese history, etiquette and morals, all the boys study English too. They will have to pass fairly difficult examinations in English Grammar, General History, Geography, Arithmetic, Geometry and the Natural Sciences, if they are to occupy any but the commonest positions in life. What makes the case harder - though they themselves do not realize it, - the scanty diet of Japan gives them an insufficient physical basis for all this severe work. The consequence is that many ambitious youths break down.

A great deal is made of athletics in boys' schools. The gymnasias are well equipped with modern apparatus. Fencing, running, leaping, are all enthusiastically cultivated. Boat races are favorite amusements of the University students. Baseball is immensely popular and admirably played.

(See Lafcadio Hearn's chapters on school-life in his "Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.")

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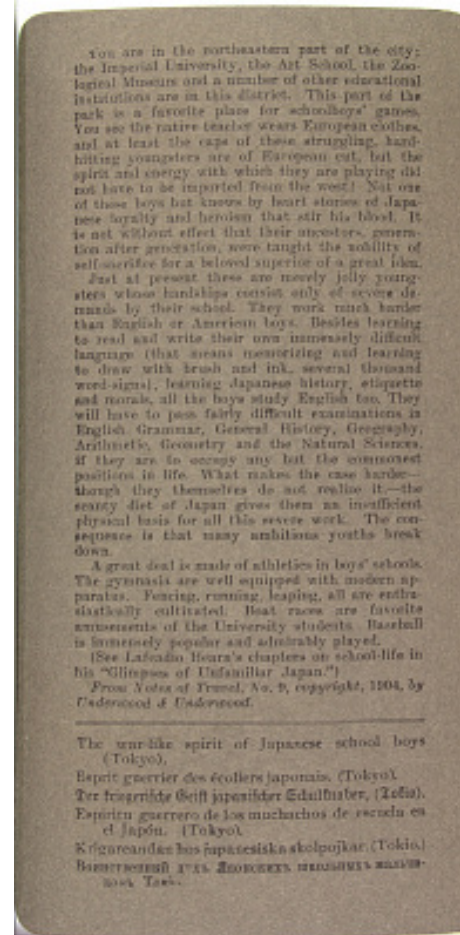
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The war-like spirit of Japanese school boys (Tokyo).

Esprit guerrier des écoliers japonais (Tokyo).

Der friegerische Geist japanischer Schulknaben, (Tofio).

Espritu guerrero de los muchachos de escuela en el Japón. (Tokyo).



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