



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Apr-24-2024 09:07:50

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You are a short day's journey north of Tokio, not far from the Nikko Mountains. The height you see ahead is Mt. Haruna; ages ago it used to be a volcano, but a blue lake now occupies the ancient crater near the summit and away up in a glen near the lake is a Shinto shrine to the Goddesses of Earth and Fire. This is a place where you are inevitably reminded of fire, for all up and down this very hillside there are hot springs (113° F.), their water charged with iron and sulphate of soda. Nearly everyone of these close-packed houses is a bath-house containing large tanks into which the steaming, sulphurous waters are drawn, ready to soak rheumatism or almost any ill out of Japanese bodies. The people you see at this moment are chiefly villagers.

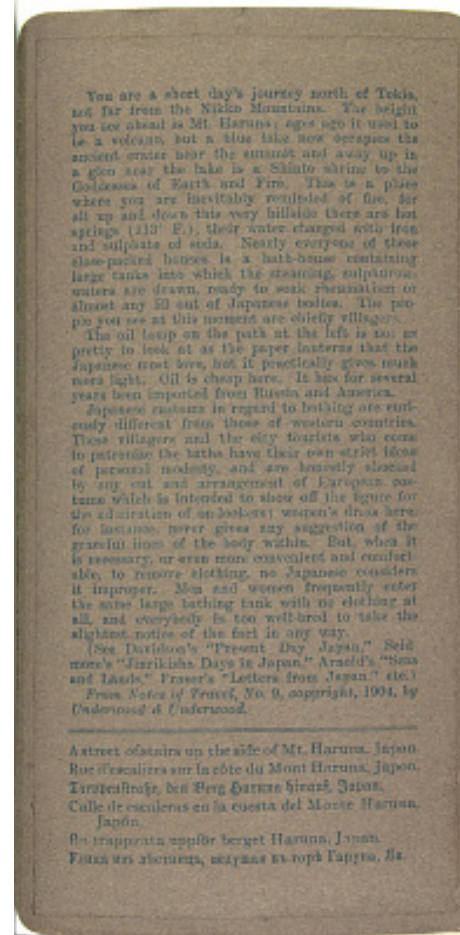
The oil lamp on the path at the left is not as pretty to look at as the paper lanterns that the Japanese most love, but it practically gives much more light. Oil is cheap here. It has for several years been imported from Russia and America.

Japanese customs in regard to bathing are curiously different from those of western countries. These villagers and the city tourists who come to patronize the baths have their own strict ideas of personal modesty, and are honestly shocked by any cut and arrangement of European costume which is intended to show off the figure for the admiration of on-lookers; women's dress here, for instance, never gives any suggestion of the graceful lines of the body within. But, when it is necessary, or even more convenient and comfortable, to remove clothing, no Japanese considers it improper. Men and women frequently enter the same large bathing tank with no clothing at all, and everyone is too well-bred to take the slightest notice of the fact in any way.

(See Davidson's "Present Day Japan," Scidmore's "Jinrikisha Days in Japan," Arnold's "Seas and Lands," Fraser's "Letters from Japan" etc.)

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A street of stairs up the side of Mt. Haruna. Japan.
Rue d'escaliers sur la côte du Mont Haruna, Japon.
Treppenstraße, den Berg Haruna hinauf, Japan.
Calle de escaleras en la cuesta del Monte Haruna. Japón.
En trappgata uppför berget Haruna, Japan.



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