

AT A HOTEL IN JAPAN

EXTRACT FROM AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION BY A TRAVELER.

In No Respect Does the Japanese Inn Resemble the American Brand—Tea That Is Tea and No Mistake—A Bath That May Become a Boil.

A Japanese hotel is built on the maza principle. Rarely is it more than a story and a half in height, as befits a house which, in this seismic land, must sometimes dance on a boiling kettle, but it spreads over a great deal of ground and has as many passages as a gopher warren. A business man's case of pigeonholes laid flat on its face would describe the ground plan very well. Outside the hotel presents, especially at night, an implacable front. The lower facade is a solid wall of cement, with a small doorway closed by a sliding panel, and the oblong aperture above is so crisscrossed with gratings as to give it the look of a rural lockup or a ship's brig.

The manager of the hotel is a humble and obsequious person, and so is his chief clerk. By his manner or costume neither is to be distinguished from the chef or the waiter. When a guest enters, there is no imposing figure at the desk to swing a register about, dip a pen in ink and inquire if the gentleman has any baggage to be sent up. Instead is a gowned, diminutive oriental, who bows until his body has taken the attitude of a carpenter's square standing on end, and about him is a staff which drops to its knees and touches its collective forehead to the floor. The guest is then invited, in phrases that are full of apology, to remove his shoes. Having done this and being filled with thankfulness that his socks have not worn through, he is bowed into a second room and then into a third and perhaps into a fourth, each apartment but little larger than a steamship's stateroom. Its walls are made of sliding partitions, with oiled paper windows, and its floor covered with small squares of matting, underlaid with soft cloth and tacked down. One of these cubby holes is assigned to him for a sleeping and living apartment.

Very likely one finds it cold, for Japan, in spite of its gulf stream, is too near Siberia to escape the rigors of the northern winter. The guest looks about for a warm corner, but there is no steam radiator, no stove, no fireplace. He claps his hands for a servant, and with his phrasebook in hand demands a fire. Again the shuffling footfall and the young woman with the oblique glance. This time she brings a brass brazier filled with burning charcoal. She places this on the floor, pokes the fire with two iron sticks, which look like knitting needles, giggles at her before, and in the lowest and sweetest of flute tones says, "Cha!"

"Cha," which has a sound corresponding to "hah," is the first word one should learn in Japan. It means tea, and tea is as much the national beverage here as beer is in Germany or ice water in the United States.

So the guest has cha. The maid, already seated on the floor, takes a dainty china cup without a handle, and placing it on a silver fills it with an unsweetened, colorless liquid, which tastes as much unlike the tea of commerce as it does unlike the vichy of a soda fountain. This is tea indeed—tea that is fit for the daimio or the mandarin—nay, for royalty itself, tea that the Japanese are wise enough to keep at home, letting the western barbarians pay their yellow gold for the acid stuff that stings one's vitals black.

When cha has been drunk, the proprietor attends. He falls on his knees and wishes to know "if gentlemen"—the generic name of the fair skinned species in native hotel vocabulary—will take a bath. At last there is something customary and familiar about this hotel. By all means a bath.

The proprietor leads, walking sidewise, through devious passages which have the narrowest of doors and the lowest of ceilings and finally opens the side of a small room, in which hangs horizontally a bamboo rod. This rod is a rack for one's clothes. In the next room is the bath. Fortunate is the man who has not prepared himself to expect a porcelain tub, a tiled floor, a shower and a corner washstand with nickel plated fittings, for he will not find them. Instead, there is a great slab of rock to stand on and an upright barrel, resting upon what looks like a block of granite, into which one is at liberty to climb and submerge himself.

The barrel is nearly full of water, which almost bubbles with heat. There is no faucet from which to turn on a cold douche, but a pair of great, clumsy, wooden buckets, filled with well water, are near by, and the guest, in the absence of a derrick, is privileged to lift them himself and turn them into his bath.

With the bath properly tempered the barrel is very comfortable indeed. There are no exposed surfaces below the bather's neck to catch the chill of the surrounding air and gather goose pimples. One sits down luxuriously, grows cheerful in the all pervading warmth and even lights a cigarette and sees visions of home in the curling smoke. But beware! It is not long before the bather begins to suspect that he is being parboiled. Was the water as hot as this when he got into it? Hark! Is that the crackle of a fat? Is that a chimney that comes up by the barrel and disappears through the ceiling? Heavens, the stone foundation of the bath is merely a stove, a furnace, in which is the hottest fire that can be made in a space four feet square! Your bath is what you might get at home if you should crawl into the kitchen boiler an hour before dinner time.—Cor. San Francisco Chronicle.

Bathed In Champagne.

The famous Cliff House at San Francisco did its greatest business during the big bonanza days, when speculators who had made a thousand or so on a sudden turn of the mining stock market devoted a share of the day's profits to a luxurious spread on the Cliff's veranda. Probably the most reckless waste of money ever seen at this place was made by an opium smuggler and dealer in Chinese return certificates named Whaley. After an expensive lunch he insisted on a champagne bath, and despite the protest of his companions he had 300 bottles of the best wine broken into a tub and then dispersed in the costly bath.—Chicago Herald.

Camphor Cures the Grip.

Doctors generally agree that camphor is the deadliest foe to grip that is now known. A drop of camphor on the tongue is excellent to break up an incipient cold, but it is a painful remedy, as it burns like a coal of fire. Much easier to take is a little lump of camphor gum allowed to slowly dissolve in the mouth. The burning sensation is very much lessened, and the help seems quite as certain.—Philadelphia Press.

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