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and seven nights free, in a building bigger than the biggest hotel in New Zealand, and with almost everything in it but a kitchen garden and orchard; or the surprise of Niwako, where on the shores of a lake as big as Taupo a luxury hotel housed German and Japanese officers and experts engaged in submarine tests in the lake itself, and bomb launching tests from a near-by mountain. I have said nothing about the Japanese railway system, which the bombers for some reason or other spared and which still works efficiently; about the incredible crowds in the shabby trams, and the use made of bicycles. It has been impossible to linger over the shrines, my visits to a University and two schools, an afternoon in a film-making studio, and our unwelcome inspection of a newspaper office. I have not said what a preposterous sham I thought the Imperial Palace we visited (Kyoto not Tokyo), with the Emperor's private garden and fishponds; how difficult I found it to feel anything in a Shinto temple; and how little there was to buy, at a price any sensible person would be prepared to give, in a department store we visited that was like five Woolworth stores one above the other. I should like to describe an exclusive shopping street in the old capital city of Kyoto, so narrow that two cars could not pass, but so expensive whether your hobby was lacquer ware or colour prints or porcelain or silk or brocades that you felt relieved when you found yourself in the street again empty-handed. I could tell you about the strange cooing noises the women in those places made when you admired something but could not quite convey why, about the treatment of Japanese babies who cry, about the national habit of bowing, the freedom of the children and the apparently absolute subjection of wives. But those things fill space and this record is already too long.

* * *

I CLOSE with a paragraph for soldiers only. From time immemorial men of my age have urged men of your age into dangers, difficulties, and discomforts that we have no intention of accepting ourselves. Inevitably I have fallen into the same trick. I am too old to serve as a soldier, too far removed from the outlook and mental interests of youth to be able to serve them usefully in any other capacity. Yet this whole story from beginning to end is an appeal to them to volunteer for Japan.

My only answer to that, if you choose to attack me for it, is that I have myself made the journey and seen some of the things I am asking you to face. But the point is not whether I have a good or a bad answer to your criticism. It is whether you have a good or bad reason for staying at home. You have a very good reason if you have already served abroad or are already doing better things in New Zealand. In any case, it is not for me to ask you how good your reason is. But it is for me to tell you, if I can do it honestly, that six months in Japan to a man who has never been out of New Zealand is education made exciting and easy, and patriotism made 90 per cent. pleasant. There will be dull days and some disagreeable experiences, but the experiences as a

SNAPSHOTS

FACE AGAIN

A shrine in a park at Kyoto, the biggest and most elaborate we have seen. We photograph it from the front and from the side, walk round it, peer irreverently into the praying-place, and begin to look for the priest. Then we remember that Shinto is a forbidden religion and start photographing some ragamuffins who have been following us hopefully round the grounds. One of us has a few pennies and another two or three pieces of gum, and each lad as we give him his portion bows and says O.K.

At this point two men draw near, one in his fifties who may be a professor or a doctor, the other an old man poorly clad. Neither looks at us. They walk slowly past, mount the steps, uncover, bow, throw some coins into the praying-box, clap their hands, lower their heads for perhaps two minutes, clap again, bow again, and withdraw. So, with some embarrassment, do we.

DARING

I AM waiting outside the American Red Cross while a colleague gets a cup of coffee. About half a dozen boys are watching me from a distance of 10 yards, when one draws a little closer. I take no notice, and he comes within two yards. Then he circles me slowly twice, darts in and touches my elbow, and in a second is back in the crowd.

I still ignore him, and he tries again. But this time he is quicker and bolder. Approaching me as if he wants to shake hands, he swerves suddenly, drops to the ground, and presses my shoe firmly with one finger.

They all laugh a little anxiously and in a second disappear.

whole will be something like dropping in on an absorbing film, going home for a sleep and a meal, and then going back again to a new instalment.

I went to Japan with a completely open mind, because it was largely an empty mind. I had read a good deal about the country in my youth, when it was a romantic place, presented in prose by Lafcadio Hearn and in verse by Sir Edwin Arnold. Since then I have read chiefly what you have read—reports by journalists from Pearl Harbour to VJ Day. In other words, the Japan that started the war and carried it on for nearly four years was a closed book to me. I do not pretend that I have now read the book. I claim only that I have read the preface and peeped at some of the illustrations. I know as much as you will know at the end of your first week or two if you volunteer and are accepted for service; and if I have not made you want to know more that is my failure as a writer and not the dullness of the topic.

Wherever I went in Japan I was asked by other soldiers—Americans, who are most numerous, Australians, and both soldiers and sailors from the United Kingdom—when the New Zealanders were coming. In every case I said soon, and that I was hurrying back to New Zealand to tell them what interesting days lay ahead of them.

Now I have told you.