The physiologist of whom I have spoken says he has established and explained the fact that arithmetic is difficult above 8–9000 feet. This may be why the calculation was only completed on the Lake of Geneva. It appeared then that there was no case against the management of the party under (*a*); if there was something of a case under (*b*) there were also points for the defence. We had played a game against a bad season, and we had won. So at least we thought, and so thinking were perhaps a little disposed to make fun of the misfortunes of better men who had played a better game and yet had lost.

A Playground at the East End.

Rambles in Japan.

By DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

MR. BAKER'S account of his walks in Japan, published in your last Number, incites me to send the JOURNAL some notes of my own excursions in that country during the past autumn. With the help of the Siberian Railway, Japan is hardly further from London than the Selkirks, and has come well within the range of our more 'eccentric' members.

On first landing in early September I found the weather so broken and the mists so constant that, acting on the 'best advice,' Mr. Walter Weston's, I gave up my intention of climbing Fujiyama and went to Pekin. On my return to Japan in October all the huts on the mountain had been closed, and, again acting on Mr. Weston's advice, I substituted a flying visit to the more remote Japanese Alps for the continuous and monotonous climb of 10,000 feet up the famous volcano, one of the chief interests in which to me would have been my fellow-pilgrims.

Like Mr. Baker, however, I paid a visit to the admirable hotel which adds to the picturesque merits of Miyanoshita. This mountain village, now established as a Tourist Resort, lies high in the centre of the Hakone hills, a group standing apart, separated by a broad level from Fujiyama, and washed at their eastern base by the waves of the Pacific. Their tops reach about 4500 feet, but the valleys are high and the scenery recalls at times that of the Cumberland Lakes. Here too are bright streams, picturesque woods, copses rich in ferns,



The Japanese Alps, from the East.

and green heights. But the soft grey, or yellow-green, of the dwarf bamboo, which so often takes the place of grass, gives the upper slopes a tone of their own, often reproduced in the native pictures of Japanese scenery. I would warmly recommend fair walkers to do as I and my companion did, extend the twelve-mile walk from Miyanoshita to Hakone and back by climbing up the steep path to the Ten Provinces Pass, and then, following the ridge to the west to the gap crossed by the old paved Tōkaidō road. By this extension the rambler escapes from the narrow circuit and confined horizon of the basin of Lake Hakone and the nearer hills, and gains an entrancing view over miles of picturesque coast-land and shining ocean, rocky promontories, scattered islets, green valleys, gleaming rivers, and distant ranges steeped in the translucent atmospheric colour characteristic of Japan. In our case the gain did not stop here. The delay brought us, after sailing up Lake Hakone, to the strange 'solfatara' the Japanese call 'Big Hell' just after sunset, and we lingered long to admire the effect of its fumes coloured red by the afterglow, and spreading like a thin veil in front of the mother-of-pearl sky and luminous blue ranges of the west, an effect as weird as any reproduced in the national art. We lingered in fact so long that we had to run to get over the precipitous part of the hillside before darkness made the narrow path difficult.

Another pleasant excursion from Miyanoshita is to cross the stream, and, passing a tea-house, climb the exceedingly steep bamboo-coated hillside opposite the village, bearing to the right until the ridge is reached just east of an eminence (Myōjō-ga-take). A scarcely traceable track leads for a mile or two along a very narrow hog's-back to the higher top known as Dai or 'The Terrace.' The traveller has before him all the way magnificent views of Fujiyama, and a wide prospect over the country and coast in the direction of Kodzu. A direct descent may be made either into the Miyanoshita glen higher up, or, to the north, to the low country and an interesting temple.

Murray's Handbook, thanks to its present Editors, is an excellent guide to the mountaineer. I owe to it what is, perhaps, the most charming approach to Fujiyama, that from Kōfu by Lake Shōji. Kōfu itself is an almost untouched specimen of a Japanese country town, with a castle hill, broad streets, gay with shop-signs and flags, cheerful inhabitants who delight in processions and dances and make delicious

sweetmeats, picturesque local industries, and one or more excellent native hotels. Situated on a fertile upland plain, it is surrounded by fine rocky mountains and looks over the nearer ridges to see the sunset reflected on the snowy head of Fuji.

A country lane first traverses for five miles a cultivated plain full of farms and hamlets and roadside stores, then crosses a broad river and mounts to a village beyond which wheels cannot go. A beaten path climbs into a recess of the hills. From the first pass it sweeps round on a high terrace commanding fine views of the rocky summits behind Kofu and of the hills to the S. Then it plunges into a delightful glen where a dozen farms, with their scanty terraced fields, lie beside the stream. The landscape reminded me of a bit of Tyrol, warmed with the colour of Japanese life and atmosphere. The remote little hamlet boasted a school, a post-office, and a simple store.

The climb to a second pass was at first through the narrowing glen and a forest of old firs, lit up by streaks and patches of vivid autumn foliage, growing on the steepest of hillsides. The Japanese are singularly expert in constructing corkscrew zigzags practicable for horses despite the declivity. On gaining the grassy ridge the bright expanse of Lake Shoji, immediately at the traveller's feet, forms the foreground, while behind it the great pyramid of Fujiyama soars into the sky. From this point of view a considerable hill at its base forms an effective footstool to the mountain. A short run (Lake Shoji is 3160 feet above the sea) leads down through the huts of a poor fishing village to the shore, where a boat will be found ready to ferry the party across to the solitary hotel on the opposite bank. The wonderful view, framed in the fir trees of its terrace, has been reproduced in Mr. Ponting's photographs. Next morning, by rowing or sailing down the three western lakes of Fuji, and walking over the old lava-bed and little pass that severally separate them, one can make half the circuit of the mountain, reach Kami Yoshida, and, taking a private car on the tram, gain Gotemba and even Yokohama, or Tokyo, the same night.

Of the Nikko walks I can add nothing to 'Murray.' I may, however, suggest that it is quite worth while, in place of taking the train thence to the next mountain resort, Ikao, to hire the hotel motor and drive the seventy miles. For the first ten miles the way lies along the great cryptomeria avenue, and then follows rural lanes and by-roads with quite good surfaces, through pleasant villages and busy country towns



Rock Pinnacles, Myogi-san.



Village Street, Ikao.

and mulberry fields. It is a silk-producing and apparently prosperous district, and many of the brown cottages with thatched and iris-ridged roofs add to their picturesqueness by the waterwheel attached to them that turns the spindles. In one point I was reminded of England. The road twists and bends at sudden angles like our own lanes, probably for the same reason: because it has grown, and not been made by an authority superior to the claims of private ownership.

Ikao is reached by a long ascent. The village, a collection of large bath-houses and shops, full of keepsakes for the visitors, is built in a picturesque staircase-street high up on the slope of a volcanic upland, among gardens and orchards, and commands a noble view to the northward over hill and dale. The steam from the natural hot springs rises from open channels between the houses and in front of the gay shops.

Some good, if short, climbs may be found among the peaks, but the indispensable walk is up the hill and across the great meadow, a weird place, which lies ringed round by a circle of volcanic heights, a mountain wall which may remind an English traveller of the background of one of Burne-Jones's pictures. At its further end a large tarn adds life to the landscape, and a little inn at the lake head supplies an excellent European luncheon. A mile—a very steep mile—beyond and below it on the southern slope is a strange temple, embedded in and overhung by the most fantastic crags, a scene literally reproducing what one had always been disposed to hold the unreal landscapes of ancient Chinese art.

Somewhat further south, within a long walk from Ikao, the mountaineer will come on the still more remarkable rock-scenery of Myogi-San. Its crags have been called the Japanese Dolomites, although geologically they have no claim to the title. Here there may still be a playground for the gymnast—though many of the 'bad places' have already been provided with chains for the help of Japanese pilgrims in search of the picturesque, and Mr. and Mrs. Weston have been busy among the more forbidding pinnacles. One of the slippery rockfaces that have to be traversed was indicated to me as that 'where the Daimio wept.' There were no chains in that Daimio's day! Another was pointed out as that 'where the Ambassador stopped.' The latter statement obviously referred to Lord and Lady Bryce's visit, a few weeks previously. It is only fair to our late President to add that on further inquiry it proved that an inopportune rainstorm had been the sole cause of his not going on to the crowning crests.

The view from the upper ridges of the mountain of its quaint pinnacles and natural archways and tangled forests is well worth the climb. I know nothing quite like it. The village of Myogi, its temple buried in a grove of enormous cryptomeria; its homely but good and thoroughly national inn, with its dainty rooms, its miniature garden and fishpond, where the big carp break the stillness of the night with their splashes, ought to realise every expectation the visitor may have formed of native Japan.

Apart from the by-corners just described, my principal hill walk was a three days' tramp into the heart of the Japanese Alps. This granite chain, with peaks attaining 10,000 ft. in height, lies a full day's journey by train west of Tokyo and is accessible by two railways in about equal time. Mr. Weston has described it in 'Murray,' and more fully in his volume on 'The Japanese Alps.' Considerable changes, however, have taken place since the latter was written. There is now a carriage road from Matsumoto up the valley of the Adzusa-gawa to a point several miles above Inekoki. This road is being carried over the chain by a pass known as the Nomugi-toge. A good cattlepath has also been constructed from Shimashima over the Tokugō-toge and the river bridged near Kamikochi, making that centre of the Japanese Alps reasonably accessible to travellers.

My plan was to cross from Shimashima the Tokugō-toge (toge=pass) to the headwaters of the Adzusa-gawa and then descend through its long gorges in two days, returning to the same spot. It was full late in the season, and my companions' time and, perhaps, my powers were limited. Moreover, as a party of British naval officers who had tried to climb the peaks ten days before had been beaten back by ice-coated rocks, I did not feel called on to put them to the test.

We approached the mountains by way of Nagano, an excellent example of a Japanese town, planted against the side of a hill, on which stands a picturesque group of temples. The surrounding hills resemble Apennines. But from the train at the next junction-station a glimpse of snowy peaks is seen. Then the line is involved in lower hills, among which it climbs steeply over a romantic little pass, known by the delightful name of 'The Hill where the Aunt was abandoned' (see 'Murray' for the legend) before it descends into the broad valley which skirts the eastern flank of the Alpine range.

Our immediate starting-point for the hills was Matsumoto, a large town, with a station on the Central Railway. Young Japan is alive to its picturesque possessions. On the platform



On Myogi-san.



On Myogi-san.

you may read 'Change here for the Japanese Alps.' All notices at stations are in English as well as Japanese, and you will generally find a list of 'Objects of attraction in the Neighbourhood'! The hotel-towel (towels throughout Japan serve as a means for advertisement) has stamped on it 'Japan Alps Station.' Here you may hire a conveyance—which was once smart—for the thirteen miles' drive across the upland plain which divides you from the mountains. On emerging from a long suburb the road passes through numerous hamlets with crooked corners and between fields and farmhouses, with here and there a silk factory or a temple half hidden in its grove. In front rises a snowy skyline; broad bold shoulders and wooded slopes fall from it towards the plain. On one of the hilltops a forest was blazing fiercely and sending columns of yellow smoke into the sky. The general effect reminded me of the Bergamasque Alps seen from the Lombard plain, and the proportions were not dissimilar. The parallel may be pressed closer; the highest peaks have much the same character, except that the Japanese Alps, being in a more southern latitude, though they abound in snowbeds, fail to produce an authentic glacier.

My companions were Mr. Eric de Bunsen, of the British Consular Service, and the excellent Komori-San, a Japanese courier procured for me by Mr. Weston, whose services were invaluable to me at all times and who did not flinch from an unusual undertaking. At Shimashima, a village perched above a waters-meet in the gate of the hills, we found a rustic inn. It was kept by a good woman who did her best, not without success, to make her guests comfortable. Above the inn was a fine schoolhouse, with a playground fitted with modern gymnastic appliances.

Next morning we had before us a long ascent to a pass of over 7000 feet. The day broke wet with rainstorms of the vigour peculiar to Japan and Ruwenzori. We waited till 9 o'clock and then, encouraged by our porters, braved the weather. We had the reward we deserved; after a time the rain subsided, grew intermittent, and finally left off. Nothing could have been more beautiful than the first part of the walk. It was early in November. The well-made modern path gave us leisure to use our eyes. The precipitous walls of the gorge afforded a feast of the most brilliant autumn colours, reds and yellows. Firs stood out upon the crags with a regard for artistic effect they show only in Japan and Italy. Every corner displayed a vignette that surpassed the last.

Presently the scene gained human interest. It was enlivened by a crowd of lumbermen, nearly naked but for their straw capes and round hats, or clad in crimson tunics, who were busy helping great logs down a torrent swollen by the recent rain. Long was the ascent over the forest path, welcome the lunch round a fire in a wayfarer's shelter, tedious the final climb up interminable zigzags, somewhat frigid the arrival on the pass, where the wind blew over fresh-fallen snow. But a few yards below we were in shelter and able to enjoy the fine sight of an apparently virgin valley 2000 ft. below, and the bold crags of Hodaka-yama (10,200 ft.) just opposite and still nearly 3000 ft. above us.

After reaching the valley we had still a good three miles of flat walking beside the river before we reached in the gloaming, in eight hours from our start, the wooden inn and bath-house of Kamikochi, the Zermatt of the district. This solitary dwelling, in external aspect strangely like a Swiss inn, lies secluded in a region occupied only by hunters and a few shepherds, miles from any other human habitation or cultivation and only to be reached over a high pass or through a deep gorge. The sleeping accommodation, however, is adequate, and the large hot bath most enjoyable. It is desirable, however, to bring provisions. The place is much frequented in summer by climbing parties of Japanese students and artists.

Next morning the ground was white with frost. We were in a flat-bottomed upland valley, where the stream meandered at large over a stony bed and all else was covered with dense forest. In the background towered grim granite ridges. Our course lay down the valley; after about an hour the mountain walls drew together and dropped into a deep gorge. Mr. Weston tells me there used to be a path down it. If so, it had been carried away or blocked by landslips at the time of our visit. We had to wander up and down over spurs, round deep bays, or across the face of the almost perpendicular slopes left bare by recent or more ancient earthfalls. The foothold was always sufficient, but there was sometimes little to spare. Plenty of the places would, before mountaineering came into vogue, have been described as spots in which 'a single false step would be fatal.' But there was nowhere any excuse for a false step. We had one noble view of the cliffs of Hodaka-yama closing the valley and the glimpses into the gorge were wild and romantic. But after a time the frequent ups and downs, the vertical staircases where the tree-stumps served as steps, or the still more aggravating muddy



Near Kamikochi.



Kamikochi.

banks grew tiresome. Presently our tiny track met a better-marked path. At the junction was a signpost giving the distance to Shirahone and expatiating on its merits as a quiet and healthful retreat in a style, as translated to us, quite worthy of a Tourist Agency. We were now on the path of a recognised native pass, the Abo-toge. But our fatigues were not over. After a steep descent a thousand feet of uphill had to be faced before we reached the brink of a deep hollow and saw the wooden roofs of the Baths of Shirahone at our feet.

The result of our day's walk, and more or less of all my mountain walks in Japan, was to impress on me the great influence of an excessive rainfall in modelling the surface of the hills. The valleys are deep and narrow, their sides torn and gashed by streams and waterfalls. The ridges, except in the case of the loftiest crests, are comparatively smooth and rounded. The distinctive charm of the scenery lies in the wooded gorges, with their exquisite combinations of crag and brilliantly coloured foliage. The upper glens and the forms of the peaks cannot vie with those of the Central Alps; they are more on a level, literally as well as picturesquely, with those of the Maritimes, or of the range to which I have already compared them, the Bergamasque Alps. The landscapes in the district I traversed were as a rule confined; there were no general views of a number of summits. The northern end of the chain seen from the neighbourhood of Nagano looked very inviting, a shapely double peak, Orenge-yama, 9974 ft., being a conspicuous object.

The bathhouse of Shirahone lies in a bottom between steep banks. It is much frequented in the summer, despite its somewhat inaccessible situation. Here again we were comfortably housed and enjoyed the privilege of the social bath, which is the rule in rural Japan. The spot is, as Mr. Weston truly writes, 'out of the world to a degree.' While we were lacing our boots on the doorstep before leaving, three damsels, drawn by the unwonted sight from their morning bath, watched our proceedings with the innocence and in the costume of Eden.

Next day we followed the river through a succession of fine defiles. In the upper portion the path had been protected by a series of wooden galleries from the frequent earthfalls. But most of these were in ruins. In other places it was carried on long platforms skilfully constructed above the water. The higher slopes were already bare, but lower down the autumn tints were in full blaze. After some four hours' steady

march we came, among picturesque rocks, on a wayside inn and a new carriage-road. It climbed high to avoid a last defile and then brought us to the large and prosperous village of Inekoki, where our carriage was in waiting. We drove through Shimashima, packed up some luggage at the inn, reached Matsumoto by dark, and Tokyo next morning by the night train, in time to attend the Mikado's Chrysanthemum Party in the garden of one of the imperial palaces.*

The Japanese Alps are, it may be desirable to point out, singularly accessible by rail. From Kioto and Nagoya there is the very beautiful Nakasendo railway, passing through a delightful succession of pastoral landscapes and romantic ravines and in sight of the second mountain of Japan, Ontaki. From Tokyo you have a choice between the line by Kofu, passing through many tunnels and past the charming Lake Sowa, and that by Myogi, Karuizawa, and Nagano. Karuizawa is the St. Moritz of the Farthest East, a group of hotels on a plateau 3300 ft. above the sea, where invalided missionaries recruit during the summer months. The Myogi crags and Ikao are both within a day's journey, and there are many short climbs near at hand; the principal is up the still active volcano of Asama, 8130 ft., the crater of which is used as a means of suicide by Japanese brides who cannot get on with their mothers-in-law and desire that their ghosts may haunt them, or lovelorn couples whose parents forbid their union. Till recently such unfortunates leapt down one of the lofty waterfalls near Nikko, but guards having been placed round this spot, they have been driven to the 'facilis descensus Averno' offered by Asama.

I would strongly urge on all visitors to Japan to take advantage of the facilities for travel which now open out the interior to every visitor who can accommodate himself to novel but not uncomfortable surroundings. The standard of comfort in most places is far above that in out-of-the-way parts of the Alps, such as the Engadine was in my youth. The tourist who confines himself to the Treaty Ports and goes about grumbling that 'the Real Japan' is at an end makes a most pitiable waste of his opportunities.

On my return to Tokyo the members of the Japanese Alpine Club were good enough to invite Mr. and Mrs. Weston and

* Good photographs of Hodaka-yama from the Tokugo-toge and the S.W., of the gorge of the Adzusa-gawa, and the Baths of Shirahone will be found in Mr. Weston's *Japanese Alps*.

myself to a banquet at a famous Japanese restaurant, which (like our 'Cock' or 'Cheshire Cheese') prides itself on keeping up old traditions. The room we dined in was walled by silver panels delicately painted with flowers; it looked out on a broad moonlit river hung with lanterns. The viands were choice and rare, the speeches models of brevity. I may venture to quote that in which my health was proposed: 'One has come down to us from 20,000 ft., but the love of Beauty and Pure Colour will soon carry back the mountaineer to his own sphere.' I was further charged to convey to the parent Club the cordial greeting of one of its youngest children.

After the speeches some charming ladies executed the Chrysanthemum Dance, while the photographer took a flashlight view of the company. Unfortunately he failed. It was the only mishap of an interesting evening. I cannot therefore reproduce the scene. To do so adequately, however, might have required a Super-Whistler.

I cannot conclude this brief note on my modest excursions among the mountains of Japan without recalling the universal kindness and courtesy of all we met, whether in inns or on the open road. The Japanese have for centuries been mountain pilgrims; they are now, for better or worse, adopting also the European point of view and treating their Alps as a play-ground. The idea of hill-climbing has to them never had any of the foolishness which it carries to some less intelligent people, and they are most ready to help any strangers who come among them, particularly Englishmen introduced by Mr. Weston, whose name is a household word in the Highlands.

Climbs in the Swiss Part of the Mont Blanc Range.

By J. W. WYATT.

THAT part of the Mont Blanc range which lies to the north of the Glacier d'Argentière does not appear to be so frequently visited by members of the Club as the more famous parts of the chain. It is, however, the happy hunting-ground of members of the Swiss Alpine Club, particularly those from the neighbourhood of the Lake of Geneva. Almost all the peaks are visible from the slopes of the Vaudois hills, and the Tour Noir itself can be seen from the streets of Montreux and Clarens.