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Two important messages are addressed to the readers of the 'Messenger,' this week. We should like to have given them each more space; but space is precious in this paper. Nevertheless, turn to them on the last page, and read them carefully, and then act promptly. Each so doing will greatly help the publishers in their work of providing this country with the best of daily and weekly journalism.

The Ascent of Fuji Yama.

(Cottager and Artisan.)

Fuji Yama, in the great Empire of Japan, is known as the 'Sacred Mountain.' Its crater, with the Buddhist shrine hard by, is annually visited by many thousands of pious pilgrims, who combine religious fervor with their love of the beautiful, and in making

sea, a towering shape of majesty and beauty.

The summit peak of the mountain during ten months of the year is always to be seen covered with snow, while the steep sides of the ascent, bare in winter; green in summer, assume strange changes of shape and color, according to the lights and shadows, the sunshine and clouds, which touch them into varying beauty; some of the rocks, formed of volcanic deposits, glittering like massed jewels in the broad glare of day.

Thus grand, beautiful, and mysterious, what wonder if this sacred mountain is held in high reverence by the superstitious? It forms the subject of the poet's verses, the bard's song. It is imaged upon the lacquer-work for which the 'Japs' are so famous, and it is painted on precious porcelain, as well

sacred dust from his clothing, or mend the frayed hem of a garment worn to rags on the crags and cinder paths of Fuji Yama. And indeed why should he, when both dust and rags are counted to him for righteousness?

Notwithstanding its height, Fuji Yama presents no danger and few difficulties to the climber, and there are six different routes by which the tourist or pilgrim may ascend. Like the Alpine mountaineer, the Japanese pilgrim avails himself of a climbing-pole, and upon it are carved or printed the sacred words Fuji Yama.

There are ten stations, or stopping-places where a pause is made for rest and refreshment on the upward journey. Each of these during the summer-time is looked after by a man who can let you have some kind of a shake-down if you wish to pass the night there, or will sell you tea or anything in the way of food you may require.

The paths up the mountain are formed of cinders and other deposits of former eruptions, trodden into an even track by pilgrims' feet; and now, as the tourist ascends he sees before him, toiling painfully up, the weary and way-worn groups. At every step the pilgrims leave broken fragments of their sandals. These are rudely constructed of rice straw, and are brittle and soon come to pieces, to be replaced by fresh ones carried by the wearers in their knapsacks.

Every turn in the winding way, every sharp corner rounded, reveals some sudden and wonderful change of view, more and more extensive and beautiful as a higher altitude is reached.

At last, arrived at the crater, the pilgrims, weary and panting, rejoice to find running close by a crystal stream of pure water. This is called the silver stream, or sacred water, and a cup brimming over with the sparkling fluid is handed to each traveller.

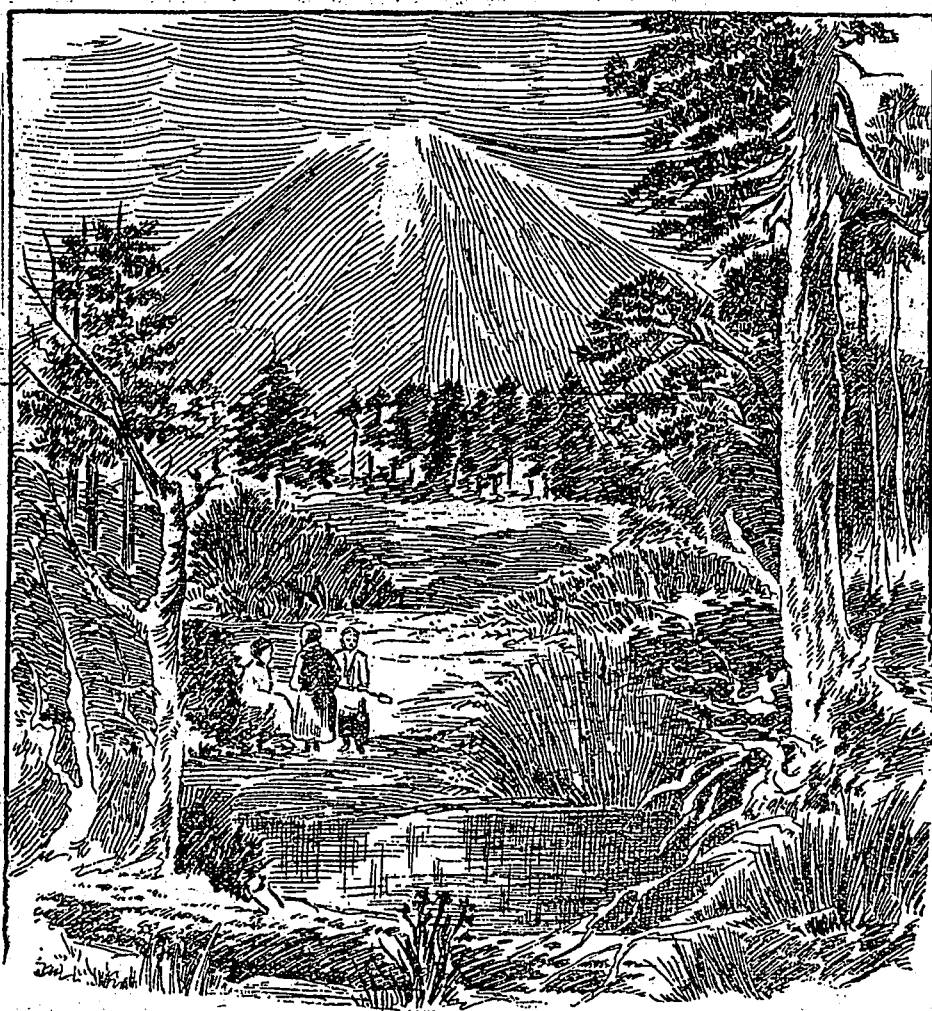
The actual crater of Fuji Yama forms a huge irregular circle. It is surrounded by volcanic crags, which some violent convulsion of nature seems to have contorted into all sorts of fantastic forms. The highest peak is on the western side, and in this part of the mountain the rocks are of all shapes and sizes.

Inside the crater, a long way down, the snow often lies even in summer, and all around and about in the yawning gulf is a chaos of broken and burnt stone, ashes, and fused minerals, some of the masses glowing rosy-red, others gleaming with a sulphurous yellow.

Not far from the crater stands the Buddhist temple or shrine, built upon a platform hewn out of the solid rock. It is an insignificant little wooden building; but near it is hung a big bell, which every pilgrim is supposed to ring to announce his arrival at the goal of his hope.

The temple is surrounded by various small wooden shanties, where sleeping accommodation and food are supplied. Certificates are also dispensed to pilgrims, to certify to others that the ascent of the Sacred Mountain has really been made.

The descent of Fuji Yama is rapid enough, especially the latter part of it, where the traveller may take long slides over the worn, polished surface of volcanic deposits, and thus make progress without exertion or fatigue.



DISTANT VIEW FUJI YAMA.

this pilgrimage enjoy also the grand panorama of views to be obtained from the heights as they ascend.

The eruptions of Fuji Yama (for it is a volcano) are recorded by Japanese writers from the ninth century, while the immense clouds of vapor put forth by the crater continued rising more or less frequently until nearly the close of the fourteenth century. Since that time the volcanic fires seem to have died out, or nearly so, only sending out at rare intervals, a faint puff of mist-like smoke from the eastern side of the crater.

The form of the mountain, right from its base, is that of a vast pyramid. Isolated, almost as an island might be in a waste of water, it rises abruptly to the height of two and one-third miles above the level of the

as on fans and other articles useful and ornamental.

The pilgrims who make a religious duty of the ascent are in the habit of clothing themselves all in white for the expedition. They cover their heads with a huge white hat having the shape of a giant mushroom, to shelter them from the hot sun. Among the pilgrims may be seen some whose white garments are dusty and frayed and worn. These men are held in the highest veneration by their fellows, for this condition of their dresses—donned only for the purpose of ascending the sacred mountain—shows that they have often made the pilgrimage.

It is said that no really pious pilgrim would be so sacrilegious as to clean off the