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A Walk in Kyoto, Japan.

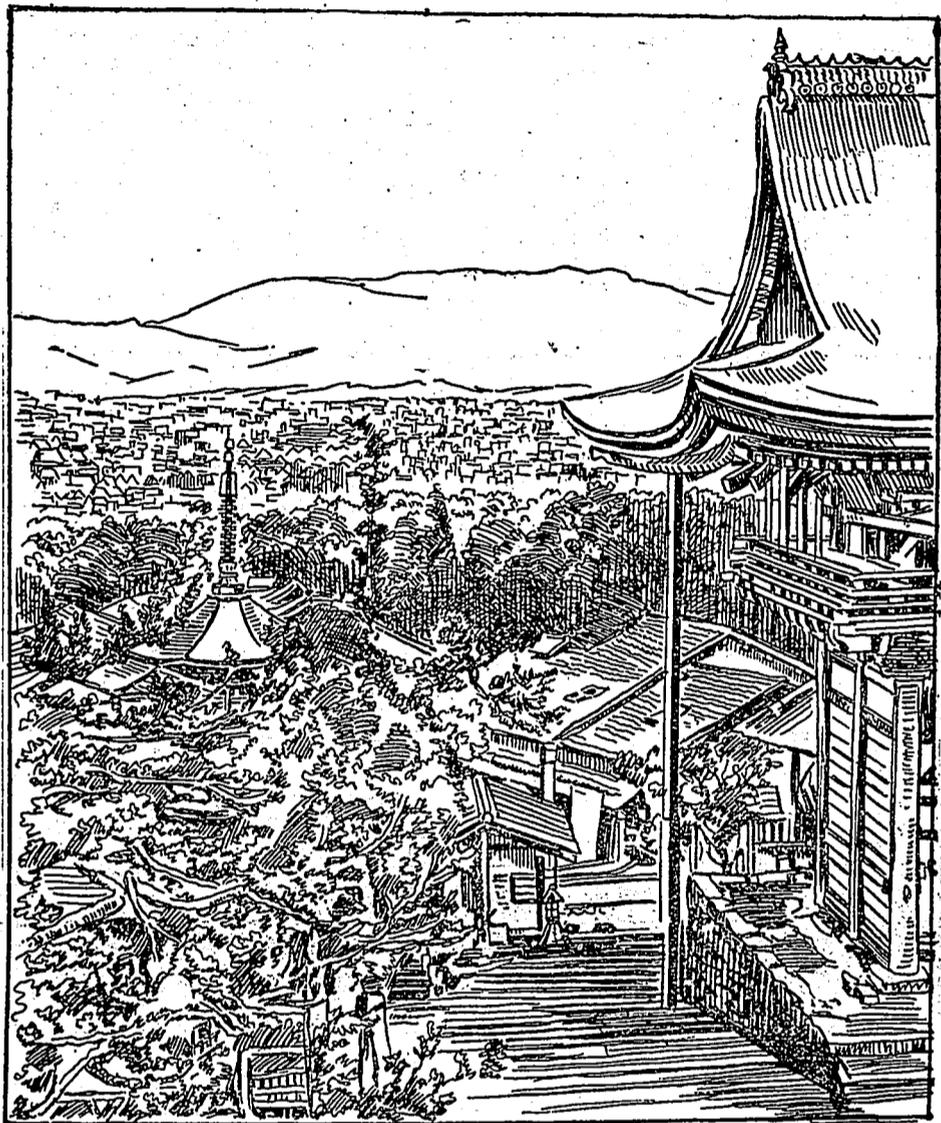
(By the Rev. Otis Cary, Koyoto, in the 'Missionary Herald.')

If you will take a walk with me through the streets of Kyoto I will call your attention specially to things in connection with the religion of the people.

Looking in at the shops that we pass, we shall see in most of them little shelves placed upon the rear wall, and having on them little shrines, tablets, or images. Often the images will represent one or more of the gods of Fortune. In all there are seven of these gods. Some of them are peculiar to Japan, others seem to have come from India. It is noteworthy that they are all deformed. Thus the one that is most honored by merchants, and who is represented as sitting on rice bags and having a bag of sold over his shoulder, has almost no legs, as though sitting down in his store like the merchants, he has lost the use of them. The god of scholarship has a large head, altogether out of proportion to his body; and so on with the others. One wonders whether those who originally brought together these seven gods did not intend to teach a sarcastic lesson by showing how the pursuit of various forms of wealth and happiness deforms and degrades men.

Before these images are placed little dishes with offerings of rice, saucers of oil containing pith wicks to be lighted in the evening, and little censors for burning incense. On some shelves there will be shrines that are reproductions on a small scale of Shinto temples. There may also be ancestral tablets; though these are more likely to be in the inner apartments of the house where the family lives.

Turning our attention toward the people in the street, we see a company of fifteen or twenty people who are staring about in very much the way that we are doing, and thus they show that they are strangers in the city. They are not foreigners, however, but people from some distant part of the country who are on a pilgrimage to the famous Shinto shrines of Ise. In olden times nearly every young person expected to make



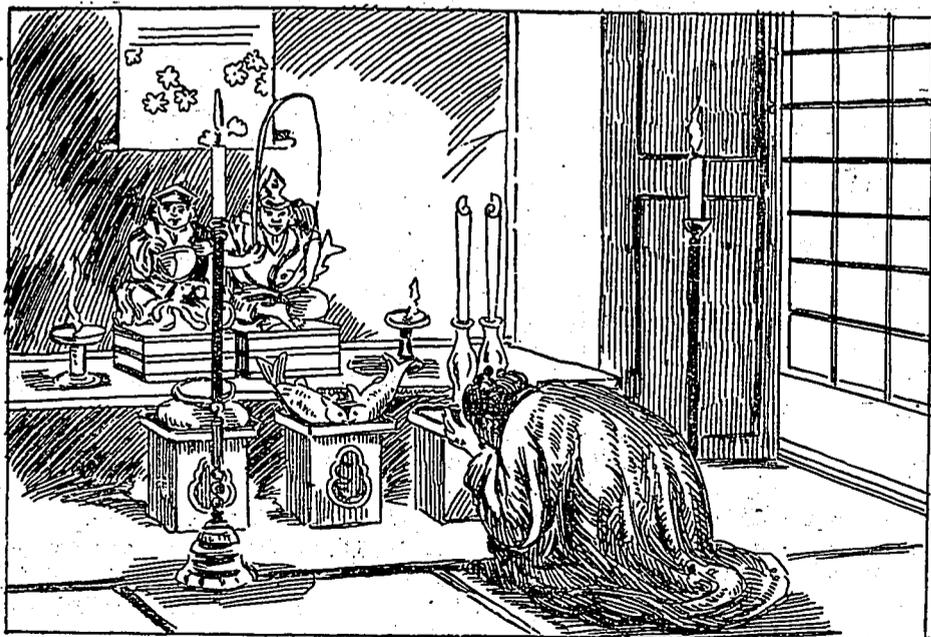
A GLIMPSE OF KYOTO.

this pilgrimage at least once. Those from the same village would go together and have a jolly time upon the road. As the Olympian games helped to bind together the different parts of Greece, so these journeyings that give an opportunity to see different cities and to meet people from all sections of the country have doubtless done much to preserve national unity. The pilgrims of the

present day are almost all peasants. They wear over their shoulders red or green blankets which at night help to eke out the scanty bedding found at the cheap hotels where they stop.

As we pass on we hear the musical tinkling of small, sweet-toned bells, accompanied by a low droning chant. We see that the sound comes from a company of eight or ten men wearing priestly clothes, and having large, bowl-shaped hats. Attached to their girdles are small bells that they strike with wooden hammers, while they chant their prayers. Going from house to house, they present their bowls to receive offerings of food that the inmates may bring. There are many varieties of these begging priests, some going in companies, and others singly. I have occasionally seen houses where, to avoid the trouble of answering these mendicants, a board is hung up at the door with several small coins, hung upon pegs. The begging priest is supposed to take one of these coins, worth one-twentieth of an American cent, without disturbing the inmates of the house.

We now come to a section of the city where before every house is hung a large paper lantern. The floor of the front room has rugs or carpets spread over the straw matting, and at the sides and back are folding screens. If the building is a shop, business is suspended, and the people are sitting upon the rugs playing 'go,' on a board some-



WORSHIPPING THE GODS OF FORTUNE.