

International Date Line

Rapidly we are getting to be experienced sailors: Four or five days out of sight of land, nothing around us but the sea with no bounds as far as we can see, into the tropics having crossed the tropic of Cancer, and having spent a day on one of the fabulous islands of the south pacific: we are on the ship again going north-westward instead of south-westward, we are headed toward the Temperate Zone again. In this week we are to lose one day out of our lives which we shall not receive back until 1920-fourteen years later. How? Well, let's say it is Thursday of this week and we go to bed as innocent as you please—and we get up in the morning and go to breakfast. The fresh menu cart stands before us on the table with plenty of good things to eat if we order them, but our eyes go roving and at the top of the card it is printed: Saturday, September _____. What have we done with Friday? We have crossed the 180th Meridian where, by international agreement the day begins! We have lost that Friday, but in the autumn of 1920 when we cross the same line going eastward, we shall have two Wednesdays in the same week though the first one is called Meridian Day, and then we shall know that we are just as old as we should have been if we had never crossed the International Date Line where the day begins.

We are heading back into the Temperate Zone and when we draw near to the mouth of Tokyo Bay we are not likely to see Mt. Fuji for it is just at the time of the Equinox and there are apt to be cloudy and rainy days. It was just so. September 21 our ship drops anchor at Yokohama to be in port about two days.

68

But our tickets are bought to Nagasaki and our trip is not over. We shall spend the two days seeing Yokohama and Tokyo.

The Japan weekly mail, published at Tokyo by Capt. F. Brinkly, will carry the news to Kyushu that the three couples of us are on the S.S. Korea and may be expected at Nagasaki in five or six more days. Rain or no rain we are young and we are new in those parts and ashore we go. Who could forget the six of us in rikishas, all with the tops up and oil-cloth front pieces to keep the rain out of our laps and off of our faces, all in line sheep-fashion, the pullers all in blue jeans and rainhats on their heads? It is about a mile to Sakuragicho where we shall find an electric train to take us the eighteen miles to Shimbashi, the main stop in Tokyo. From Shimbashi we engage six rikishas again and start out to see the city of ^{one}~~ten~~ million people, one eighth as big as it is in 1961. But Tokyo had been the Capital of the Tokugawa Clan for hundreds of years before the Emperor moved there from Kyoto in 1868. And the great moat was there around the castle as now and the great wall around the 500 acres of palace grounds, and the double-bridge (Niju-Bashi) were there just as they are now.

It was soon lunch time and we went to the Imperial Hotel to get something to eat. I don't remember who sent us there, but I do remember the first course of our meal; soup with a whole egg just poured out of its shell into the soup! I don't remember how many of us ate soup, egg and all!

We "saw" Tokyo and retraced our steps to the ship which had become our home. While the boat stayed in Yokohama we went up on the "Bluff" and met Dr. W.B. Parshley at the Northern Baptist Seminary

and Miss Converse at the girls' school carried on by the Northern Baptists.

Then the ship moved on to Kobe² and we had better weather there and did some sight-seeing, seeing as I remember the Nunobiki waterfall.

September 27 or 28 we reached Nagasaki as we went up the harbor between two mountains one of the officers of the ship was telling us how that was the second most beautiful harbor in the world ; that only Rio in Brazil had a harbor more beautiful.

When the ship got to its stopping place we were met by a missionary and a young Japanese pastor. Then we began to feel at home—we had two friends who understood anything that was said to them in Japanese.

But our baggage had to be opened at the custom house and the articles compared with the list we had carefully made. The list had on it some linen towels and "linen" was subject to duty even if it were a personal possession. We opened every piece of baggage² I guess and hunted diligently, ourselves, our friends and the customs officials, but we never found any linen. It looked like a young missionary couple would have to go through life with the reputation of having claimed to have some linen towels when they didn't have any such thing. They let us close up the baggage and go on as nothing dutiable was found. But fate was kind to us. When we unpacked everything at Fukuoka there were the linen towels! Maggie's mother had packed our dishes at Winchester, Tennessee, and had done it so carefully that a number of pieces of China ware were one by one carefully wrapped in a linen towel.