At 4.30 p.m. we left Yokohama and sailed for Nagaya, our next port of call. We reached this place at 7.30 the next morning and anchored in the harbour. There was little cargo to be taken aboard, so the ship only stayed a few hours.

The passengers were offered the opportunity of going ashore for a short time, but it appeared that the town itself was some distance inland, and except as a commercial centre, it had few other attractions. So we remained aboard, and decided that we would wait until we reached Osaka before making further explorations. The S.S. "Patroclus" left Nagaya the same afternoon, and reached Osaka at 9 the next morning, that is on May 28. Here again the ship was expected to remain a few hours only before proceeding to Kobe, which was less than two hours' journey further on. The passengers decided to get off at Osaka, and see the local sights, and then catch a train to Kobe, and meet the boat there in the evening.

Osaka itself is a huge commercial city with a population of two and a half million inhabitants, and has been described as the Manchester of Japan. There was a tremendous amount of shipping in the harbour, mostly, of course, Japanese.

A friend and myself left the dock area and caught a taxi which drove us to Osaka Castle. Travelling in this part of Japan was not nearly so easy as in the Yokohama area, since relatively few people seemed to understand English. We drove through some miles of drab-looking streets before reaching our first destination.

The castle was built in 1584, and had a circumference of two and a half miles. It was to a large extent destroyed during the revolution of 1868. However, enough remains to show what an extraordinary work of defence it must have originally been. First, there is a very deep outer moat, with a width of 250 to 360 feet. Passing through the fortified gateway we crossed a drawbridge, and came upon the first defence area. Within this is a second moat nearly as deep and wide as the first. Another drawbridge and fortified gateway took us to the inner defence area. A part of this area is now laid out in attractive gardens. On the far side is a modern five-story pagoda-like building which is now used partly as a museum and partly to enable visitors to get a general view of the city. On looking down from the top, it seemed that there was originally a third or innermost moat to protect the
citadel. The rampart walls are built of huge blocks of granite stones, some of which are said to measure 40 feet long, 10 feet high and 8 feet thick. The view of the city was somewhat disappointing, as it was limited by a pall of smoke. One simply saw masses of houses, streets, and waterways in the immediate area.

Leaving the castle, we next took a taxi and visited the Tennoji temple. Here there is a collection of smaller temples, shrines, pagodas, booths and what not. Among the crowd of people, there was a fair sprinkling of deformed and decrepit beggars. One of the items of interest is a huge bell, which was cast in 1903. It weighs 200 tons, is 24 feet high, and 16 feet in diameter. It is suspended some ten feet from the ground. The striker is a massive beam slung horizontally. Near the belfry are two small ponds, simply alive with tortoises.

We next drove to one of the city railway stations, and took a train to Nara, which lies some twenty miles to the East. The first part of the journey was over flat, highly cultivated countryside. Beyond this we passed through some wooded undulating hills, which made an effective contrast to the scenery. It was a fast electric train, and we reached Nara in less than three quarters of an hour. This town was the Imperial Capital during the eighth century, and was also the centre of Buddhism. Since then, its political importance has dwindled, and now it is little more than a country village. We had the usual difficulty in making our wants understood. However, we managed later to find a rickshaw boy who understood a little English. He was a cheery little fellow, and very willing. I also found a small map of the district in one of the shops, and that helped us to get our bearings. The first object of interest was the Sarusawa pond, which the guide book says "is teeming with fish and tortoises." However, we saw neither. Instead, it appeared to be a dirty little village pond more suitable for frogs.

We then drove into the Nara Park, stated to be "the largest and most lovely park in Japan, covering an area of 1,250 acres," in which, among other things, are "700 tame deer wandering about." Near the entrance gate is the Kofaku-ji-Temple, which is described as having two pagodas of historical interest. One appeared to be missing, and the other was not particularly impressive as seen from the road. So we told the rickshaw boys to take us along to the Nara Hotel, which lies within the park, a short distance from the entrance gate. This is a first-class establishment, and we had a very enjoyable tiffin. The scenery round the hotel, too, is quite pretty. Afterwards, the rickshaw boys took us along the main avenue of the park towards the area where the shrines and temples are situated. It is a longish drive, and one can quite imagine that the dimensions of the park are as stated. Numerous spotted deer sauntered about the roadway, and in fact were so tame that they would scarcely move out of our way. Our first stop was at the Kasuga shrine, which was originally built in A.D. 768. It is well known on account of the numerous picturesque hanging lanterns
suspended from the eaves of the roof. Lanterns seem to have had a vogue of popularity here, as the pathways are lined on either side with stone specimens of thousands of them. A notice at one of the temple buildings stated that visitors could see exhibitions of religious dances on payment of one yen (1s. 3d.). Unfortunately we had not sufficient time to wait.

The rickshaw boy pointed out a tree on which five other specimens of trees had been successfully grafted. We were then shown several other temples in the vicinity. They were all very picturesque, but call for no special comment. At last, we were taken to see the Daibutsu, a colossal statue of Buddha—"a No. 1" specimen, as our boy described it. It was cast in bronze in A.D. 749, and stands 53 feet in height. Except for its dimensions it is not exactly an object of beauty. Near the temple is another of those huge bells, "a No. 2 bell," as our boy says, being rather smaller than the one at Osaka.

After this, we drove back through the park by another route and returned to the station. Nara would be a very pleasant and quiet spot to stay at, if one had the time. Everything seemed so peaceful and soothing except the restless visitors.

We gave our rickshaw boys what they asked for—a very moderate wage, and they seemed perfectly pleased. Of course, there were many other temples and objects of interest in the district that we did not see.

On arrival back at Osaka, we had to cross the city by taxi to reach the main line to Kobe. This was a longish journey, and the streets resembled...
those of any other commercial town, except that we had to cross numerous waterways. On taking our tickets to Kobe, I found myself rather short of cash, until the girl clerk pointed out that I had accidentally dropped a five-yen note.

Kobe is a modern seaport town with a population of nearly a million inhabitants. It is bounded on the North by a mountain range which runs more or less parallel with the coast line. Some of the peaks are 2,000 to 3,000 feet high. From the bay there is a gradual incline upwards to the foot of the mountains.

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On the following morning, I caught an early express train from Kobe to Kyoto. The journey takes a little over an hour.

Kyoto became the capital of Japan after Nara, in 794 A.D., and remained so for over a thousand years, when the capital was transferred to Tokyo in 1868. It has numerous places of interest within easy reach, also good hotels, and consequently is a favourite tourist centre. A popular excursion is to motor to Kameoka, a distance of some thirty miles through hilly wooded country, and then shoot the Hozu Rapids. This takes one a distance of about thirteen miles downstream. Apart from the scenic effects, the journey can be quite thrilling, according to the state of the river. On arrival at Kyoto, I hired a rickshaw to drive round the places of interest.

The boy first took me to see the monastic temple of Hishihonganji, otherwise known as the "hair-ropes" temple. It is a fine structure, with
From Singapore to North China and Japan

pavilions rising as high as 126 feet, and was completed as recently as 1895. The origin of the synonym lies in the fact that there was some difficulty in dealing with the transport and erection of the massive wooden pillars and supports, as the locally made ropes were not sufficiently strong to take the strain. Then someone had a brain-wave and said that human hair weaved into cables, would meet the case. The lady devotees promptly rose to the occasion and sacrificed their tresses to the tune of some five tons. Two of these immense cables remain and are kept in glass cases, where they can be seen by visitors. After this, the rickshaw boy drove us round to some of the local bazaars. Kyoto is a centre for the manufacture of bronzes, embroideries, silks, damascene, cloisonné, etc. Good stuff is naturally expensive, but apart from that the prices appeared to be exceptionally low, partly, no doubt, on account of the exchange. Incidentally, good damascene, having a basis of steel, is attracted by a magnet, and should bear the stamp K 24 (24 carat gold inlay).

There are a number of interesting places to be seen if one had the time. I decided to visit Takarazaka, a popular amusement resort, a few miles from Kobe. At the Kyoto railway station restaurant I got a very good table d'hôtes lunch for one yen (1s. 3d.). There was another room set aside for those who wanted just Japanese food, but it seemed less popular.

After lunch I caught a train to Osaka. Though anxious to see as much as possible of the countryside, I was weary and soon fell asleep. The next thing that I noticed was a tap on the shoulder, and on looking up found the carriage empty except for the guard and myself. "Osaka," said he, and he was quite right. A short distance from the station is a light railway, which runs to Takarazaka and Kobe. During this part of the journey, we passed through an interminable number of small suburban stations and villages, and one wondered where the train would eventually end up. However, the train got to the right spot at last, and the next problem was to find the amusement park. This was reached after walking some distance through some circuitous alley-ways. Takarazaka Park has two main points of interest. One is the very large building which contains the Opera House, restaurants, and other places of subsidiary interest, the other is the Park portion divided into sectors each of which contains some object of interest, such as a small zoological garden, botanical garden, swimming pool, boating pool, children's amusement park, etc. Each sector is connected by a foot bridge which spans the intervening roadways.

I had been told that the opera began at 5 p.m., but discovered afterwards that that only applied to Sundays and holidays. On other days the performance begins at 1 p.m. Consequently, when I applied for a ticket of admission at 4.45 p.m., there was none to be had, which made me wonder at the time why the girl door-keepers gave me free admission. However, one saw sufficient of the last revue to get an idea of the standard of technique and efficiency on which this place is run. To begin with, the theatre is larger than any other I have previously seen. The lighting effects
and stage management compare favourably with those seen in Germany. While the principal artists, dancers, and chorus would do credit to any West End London show. The programme on this occasion consisted of four items, two operas, or presumably operettas, a "dance," and a revue.

The principal parts and chorus are played entirely by girls. Someone who had been there previously estimated that there must have been nearly 300 of them on the stage at once during one of the revues that he had seen. Altogether, the Japanese girl seems to be pretty efficient in any occupation, whether as a bus conductor, railway clerk, or saleswoman, apart from her ability to act on the stage. Strangely enough, I never saw one of them driving a car. The men drivers are good, but inclined to be reckless.

The Moto-Machi street, Kobe.

The S.S. "Patroclus" was scheduled to leave Kobe on May 30, so the following morning was spent in wandering round the main streets and shopping centres. One long street, called the Moto-Machi, is always an object of interest.

Its use is entirely confined to pedestrians, and on either side there is a continuous row of shops. Here one can buy all manner of things, from curios to general utility goods. There are also two large stores of the super-Woolworth type. The street is brilliantly lit in the evening by arched lamp standards, and presents a very animated scene.

There are several short excursions to be made from Kobe, one of which is a visit to the Peak Rokko-san (about 3,062 feet), where there is a new hotel, and an 18-hole golf course.
The Japanese themselves seem to be badly bitten with the craze for base-ball, and we constantly saw boys practising this game.

The month of May is a little late for the cherry blossom season, but as there were so many other things to see in the short period that we were there, one did not seem to miss it much. However, we did see a very large number of fish-like paper-pennons dangling from flag-masts. This was to commemorate the annual festival of boys' day. The emblems are supposed to connote trout with their heads pointing upstream, that is to say, swimming against the current. The idea is to signify to the lads that they must be constantly striving, if they want to get on in life, or, in other words, that they must keep their noses to the grindstone! One has often heard of the cleanliness of the Japanese people, but it was surprising to find so many of the coolie or labouring class wearing gloves while they were at work.

The boat left Kobe early on the morning of May 31, and arrived at Shanghai early on June 2, that is to say, in a little more than two days' sailing. Shanghai appeared less attractive than ever. The streets were hot, stuffy, and smelly, so that one was glad to get back to the ship for a breath of fresh air.

The S.S. "Patroclus" left Shanghai a little before noon on June 4, and arrived at Hong Kong at noon on the 7th, that is to say, just in three days' sailing. The boat was due to sail again the same evening, so the passengers could only get a cursory glance at Hong Kong. A party of us had lunch at the P.O. Hotel at Kowloon. The catering arrangements here may be good, but they are certainly expensive. For those who have a week or so to spend at Hong Kong, there are certain places of interest in the vicinity that are well worth visiting.

Canton lies about 100 miles to the West and can be reached by rail or steamer. It is better to go up by train and come back by steamer, as the river journey upstream is rather tedious. Arriving at the station at Canton one can get a taxi to take one to the European settlement on the Shameen. The distance is some two to three miles, through somewhat congested streets. On the Shameen is a small European hotel. It is as well to take tickets, and book a room in advance at the hotel through Cooks' Agents at Hong Kong.

I neglected this precaution and, on arriving at the hotel in the evening, found the place full. I then had to find another hotel in the Chinese City, and eventually stayed the night at the Sun Hotel. This place was raided by the Civil Police about 3 a.m. in the morning. It is a large, newly built hotel, under Chinese management. On the top of the building is a Chinese amusement "park," with three Chinese theatres, a cinema, and a roof garden. The place is well worth visiting in the evening.

The Shameen would appear to have been originally a river mud flat, and covers an area of approximately two-thirds of a mile by a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the left river bank by a canal, which is crossed by
a guarded foot-bridge. Canton is said to be a good shopping centre for silks, embroideries, and such-like things. Apart from that, a motor drive round the environments of the town is quite interesting. The return trip down the Canton river to Hong Kong can be quite enjoyable.

Another excursion from Hong Kong is a sea trip to the Portuguese town of Macao. It lies about forty miles to the south west of Hong Kong. Macao itself is a pretty little place, as seen from the boat. It has a few objects of interest, such as the old fort, and the ruins of one of the first Christian churches built in China.

One of its principal sources of attraction, and a source of revenue to the town, is the game of Fan-Tan. There are several licensed houses for this form of gambling. It is interesting to watch the impassive features of the Chinese as they stake their money. At the same time they are constantly chewing melon seeds. There is one decent hotel at Macao, and several reasonably good Chinese restaurants. Passing through the local food market, I saw a peculiar local fish of a large herring type. Specimens of these fish were slit open, and their hearts continued to beat, in spite of the fact that they must have been otherwise dead for some time previously.

Tourists interested in golf will find Fanling as good a place as they can wish to see in the East. It lies some fifteen to twenty miles north west of Kowloon, and can be reached by road or rail. There are two 18-hole courses and one 9-hole course available to play on. The Club extends its hospitality to tourists on the necessary introduction, and, in addition, has sleeping accommodation for those who wish to stay out there. The adjoining hills have been planted with trees and this greatly improves the local scenery.

We left Hong Kong at 7 p.m. on June 7, and arrived at Singapore on the evening of the 11th, though too late to disembark that night.

The seven-week voyage had been most enjoyable and instructive. The service, catering, and accommodation on the boat were excellent.

For those who may expect to pass through Singapore, a brief description of the place may be of some help. The troopships usually arrive at 7 a.m. and leave at noon the same day, unless a battalion is being transferred here.

Entering the harbour docks alongside the straits, two small islands will be noticed to the south, the larger of which, Blakan-Mati, is occupied by the R.A., and the smaller one, Pulau Brani, by the R.E. Services. The wharf at which the troopship usually ties up is the farthest from the centre of the town, and necessitates the use of a taxi, if a friend’s car is not available. Most visitors go first to Raffles Place, near which are the leading shops, banks, and commercial agencies.

Japanese and Chinese silk shops will be found at High Street and North Bridge Road, half a mile farther on. Near here are the two leading hotels, Raffles and the Adelphi. About two miles to the north of the town are the battalion barracks at Tanglin, near the Botanical Gardens.
Singapore island is roughly diamond-shaped, with a long axis running east to west approximately thirty miles, and the shorter axis running north to south of eighteen miles. Opposite the northern point is Johore Bahru, the capital of Johore State, which is reached by a causeway crossing the Johore Straits. Continuing along the Straits in an easterly direction, is first the Naval Base, at Seletar, then the R.A.F. Base, and lastly, the new military defences on the eastern extremity at Changi. All these places lie approximately eighteen miles from Singapore town and each can be reached by car within an hour.


Singapore is a modern town, and was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in the early part of the last century, or, to be exact, in 1819. It has grown from a small fishing village to a town with a population of nearly a million inhabitants. The majority of these are Chinese. The biography of Sir Stamford Raffles is an epic of modern English history, and deserves to be better known.

There is practically nothing of any historical interest to be seen in Singapore Island. Raffles Museum has a good collection of exhibits collected from the Malay Archipelago.