TO FUZIYAMA AND BACK.

I.

FUZIYAMA, the loftiest and most celebrated peak of Japan, can be ascended with comfort, I may even say with safety, only in the months of July and August, and occasionally in the early part of September. At all other times its summit is covered with snow. When, therefore, a few days after my arrival in that land, which was at the end of a certain August, the suggestion broke forth one evening, that a compact and sympathetic party should straightway be formed for the achievement of the famous mountain, I inwardly hailed it with keen delight, though I felt impelled to respond at first with these words only:—

"Very good. I approve; but I also protest."

Protest? Why protest? and against what? And, if "protest," wherefore "very good"? Would I be kind enough to explain?

Of course I would explain: nothing was easier.
than to explain. No inconsiderable part of my career as an excursionist in various parts of the globe had been passed in protesting against precisely the same form of tourist absurdity which long and unvarying experience taught me to foresee impending in the present instance. I had protested alike in Wales, Franconia, Scotland, the Rocky Mountains, Egypt, and Switzerland; always earnestly, often logically, sometimes eloquently, and never successfully. Either the superior resolution of companions, or my own feebleness of will, had invariably overcome me. But, confident of the justice of my convictions, I proceeded to protest once again,—as I shall forever continue to protest, under kindred circumstances, even with the certainty of defeat before me,—with more energy and at greater length than need here be repeated, but to the following effect:—

In preparing for expeditions of the kind now projected, all travellers, whatever their age, station, or place of birth, accept, without consideration or discussion, as a foregone and inevitable conclusion, the fictitious necessity of interrupting the regular habits of their lives, impairing their digestions, embittering their tempers, destroying their powers of observation, and dulling their