

2. In time of war to afford help to the reserve hospitals of the army, and to send members of the staff to help the medical corps of the army in the field.

3. In time of peace to treat sick and wounded persons, whether indigent or not, in order that the staff may obtain experience; and to maintain a prompt service of help in the case of public calamities.

It is the object of the Society to procure not only a sufficient number of competent nurses, but also that they shall be morally of a high standard.

The idea that Japanese women should care for men outside their own families was at first inconceivable, and no woman of a certain social position could become a nurse without losing her reputation. Therefore, only women of the lower and illiterate classes had taken up nursing. It was necessary, therefore, to teach the public that it was a noble and patriotic duty to care for sick and wounded soldiers, and that nothing was more honourable to a woman than assisting in this noble task. For this ideal to become a reality it was necessary that the first nurses of the Society should be ladies of high position. This end has been completely attained, and the nurses of the Japanese Red Cross Society are respected throughout the world. In the recent war with China they were for the first time employed in the Reserve Hospitals, and several were subsequently decorated by the State in recognition of the services they then rendered.

The nurses of the Japanese Red Cross Society are authorised to assist the medical service on board hospital ships, and one of these ships in the war between China and Japan carried a Superintendent of Nursing and twelve trained nurses. During this war, also, wounded French soldiers were received in an auxiliary hospital and cared for by Japanese nurses. In a letter of thanks addressed to the management of the hospital, they subsequently expressed in the most touching terms their gratitude for the attentive care they had received.

The following description of a Japanese nurse, from that charming book "A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan,"

by Mrs. Archibald Little, will be read with interest by many of our readers. It will be remembered that the first training-school in Japan for nurses was founded at Kioto by Miss Linda Richards, now Superintendent of Nurses at the State Hospital, Worcester, Massachusetts:—

"My first Japanese trained nurse—I shall never forget the day when she first loomed on my astonished vision.

"She was barely four feet high, her complexion was dark in the extreme, her feet were encased in white linen socks with divided toes, and shod with dainty

straw sandals with green velvet straps. Her figure, the shape of a very soft feather pillow which has been hung up by one end for days, was draped in a tight-fitting white apron with a large bib, and she was kept inside her buttonless and stringless clothes by a cruelly tight and wide leather belt put on over apron and all. Into this belt, holding her breath for a long time, she could, with a great effort, push her fat silver watch, her clinical thermometer, two or three yards of a Japanese letter (which she would read, a foot at a time, when she thought I was asleep), her carefully-folded pocket-handkerchief, and the relentless little register in which she noted down, from right to left, strange cabalistic signs, with which she and the doctor conjured every morning till they knew all the sins my pulse and temperature had been committing for the last twenty-four hours. Her name was O'Tara San (Honourable Tiger Miss), but her ways were those of



Nurses of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

the softest and most harmless pussy that ever purred on a domestic hearthrug; and oh! what a nurse she was! So gentle, so smiling, so very delightfully sorry for one! It was quite worth being ill to revel in such seas of sympathy. I have often caught the tears running down her little brown nose when the poor okusama was extra bad; and through long nights of pain has she stood by my bed or sat on her heels on a corner of it, fanning me ceaselessly with the all but imperceptible flutter of the fan's edge—a movement only possible for those wonderfully sensitive Japanese fingers, but most refreshing to the fanned one.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)