

manner. The dressings and towels were in tins, which opened from the ground by placing the foot on a pedal or lever. Although the operation was a major one it was impossible for the patient to take an anæsthetic, so it had to be performed under a local one. "The greatest delicacy of thought for the feelings of the patient in these trying circumstances was manifest. I left the theatre," says Miss McCaul, "deeply impressed with all I had seen, and at the same time full of admiration for these gentle little Japanese nurses, from whom we have so much to learn."

On May 28th the party, still accompanied by Mme. Kuroda, started for the front. "Ever since March 18th, when we left Tilbury, we had been working our way slowly towards this destination." On board the *Hakwai Maru*, the hospital ship on which they embarked, they were received by the captain, surrounded by his own and some military officers, all of whom were in full dress. Behind him stood twenty-two army nurses, including two matrons, and the ship's crew. In the afternoon the visitors went over the ship, which was painted white inside and out, and the Red Cross was everywhere to be seen. The surroundings were bright and cheerful, not to say dainty. The accommodation for the men was good, though somewhat crowded, but as the passage it was then making took only sixty-eight hours it was thought better to crowd the patients a little than to leave them in unhealthy Chinese towns.

The Red Cross Society's ships are so constructed that in time of peace they can be used as passenger ships, and can be transformed into hospitals in a little over forty-eight hours.

Arrived at Antong, the visitors saw something of the condition at the front, and saw in use the working of the carefully-planned outfit seen at Tokio. The few mild cases of dysentery were entirely isolated, the doctors explaining that they treated the disease as "infectious"—surely a wise and rational precaution.

The conditions prevailing at Antong seem to leave much to be desired. A Korean has no idea of sanitation. He thinks it part of his existence to have small-pox and typhus, and the earlier they are over the better for him. Some Russian stretchers, which with other spoils were being shipped to Japan from Antong, formed a strong contrast to those used by the Japanese; they were so heavy that Miss McCaul and her friend could only just lift them. Their ambulance carts were so clumsy, and so short that it would be impossible for a man to lie down in them at full length.

A word in relation to the transport arrangements. The writer says:—"It was impossible not to draw comparisons between this almost fragile transport and the large clumsy waggons seen in Natal." The Japanese Army biscuits, which are very nice, are served out to the men twice a day in sealed packets, the covering being thin but very tough paper-bags, which are efficient protection from dust and flies.

The Sanitary Corps have devised a plan of supplying the troops in the field with boiled water by means of Chinese portable iron boilers. The rapidity with which the water is boiled is extraordinary, and "there is a stringent discipline about troops being found drinking or filling a water bottle at a river. If a man is caught disobeying the order, a mark is put against him, and at a convenient time punishment is meted out; also it is noted as a serious crime at headquarters."

The next move was to Fang-hwang-cheng. Here the travellers found the British Attaché Sir Ian Hamilton,

Colonel Hume, Captain Vincent (Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's clever nephew) and Captain Jardine. "How good it was," says Miss McCaul, "to look again upon our English uniform, with its neat ribbon decorations." They seem to have been very hospitably entertained by these British officers, who gave them of their best, though Miss McCaul remarks, "if this was a banquet, what could they have been living on, for, though it sounds very nice, it was most unappetising."

In the operating-room of the hospital there "the hand of the carpenter was to be seen." Everything displayed thought and economy, and yet many of the appliances would have been considered luxuries if brought all the way from Japan. Dr. Kumura explained that they only brought the bare necessities for a big stationary hospital like this, depending on the working staff to supply everything else, thus keeping the transport exceedingly light.

"Biscuit tins play a most important part. An order is issued forbidding them to be thrown away—not that anything ever is thrown away by a Japanese. These biscuit tins are large, very much the same shape as those that strewed the camping grounds in Natal. Out of these are made, and thoroughly well made, the following articles:—Kettles, basins, pails, soiled dressing tins, and appliances for nursing, as well as many culinary utensils, which cost practically nothing. They are easily replenished, and when worn out are carefully buried. The refuse also, which cannot be burnt, is buried."

An admirable arrangement for the comfort of the men on the march is that when their feet become sore they are provided with sock and sandals. These only last about ten days, but this is found quite long enough to allow the feet to heal. By this simple means many a man was saved from falling out. In noting this fact, Miss McCaul says "there can be no doubt that many of our men suffer tortures from the unnecessarily heavy, clumsy, and ill-fitting boots with which they are provided. The Japanese troops wear a far superior boot, made from good leather, well cut, and scarcely weighing 3 lb. per pair."

On June 11th, Miss McCaul once more embarked for Japan, and after some exciting experiences, for at one time it seemed likely that the ship might fall into the hands of the enemy, arrived there safely. As Madame Kuroda announced that if anything happened to her charges she would make use of the little dagger, without which no Japanese woman is supposed to travel abroad, they must have been glad to see land. Madame Kuroda's point of view apparently was that, if anything happened to Miss McCaul and Miss St. Aubyn, she would have failed in her mission which was to bring them safely back to Japan. Also, she said, if she fell into the hands of the Russians and had to answer questions, she would feel justified in committing "hirai-kirai."

The picture of Madame Kuroda throughout the book is of a dignified, unselfish, self-controlled woman. Witness her remark, "Kissing was imported, you know; we have only recently learnt it from foreigners."

The appendix to the book contains an interesting account of the origin, foundation, and outcome of the Red Cross Society of Japan, as well as other Red Cross notes. Candidates for admission as probationers in the Red Cross Hospital must pass two examinations—one as to constitutional fitness, and the other in general education—after which they must pass through a three years' course, with subsequent examinations.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)