

act being to prevent the ghost of the departed following or molesting them afterwards.

Though Sierra Leone can hardly be called a health resort, there is much to interest one in its peoples, with their quaint customs, curious ideas of civilisation and religion, and their modes of life, &c. There is also the country itself, many parts of which are practically unknown, and yet full of Nature's curios for those who care to look for them.

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### SANITATION IN JAPAN.

BY LIEUTENANT C. RYLEY.

*Royal Army Medical Corps.*

THE customs and domestic economy of the Japanese are so different to any other nation, civilised or uncivilised, that a study of their methods of personal hygiene and disease prevention well repays one's curiosity.

Those with æsthetic natures may scorn the sanitarian who, in the land of flowers and scenery, can waste a glance on such material objects as drains and water supplies. But during two tours of leave spent in various parts of Japan, I may as well confess that my enthusiasm in temples, curios, and iris fields began to wane, and my interest in the manners and customs of the people to increase.

The "back to the land" theory is seen here in its ideal sense—no nitrogen is wasted; the sewage of the villages being conveyed along open drains in front of the houses to a cess-pool just outside the town, to be later deposited on the rice-fields and vegetable gardens. This is a frequent cause of enteric amongst visitors to the country, who do not follow the native custom of eschewing raw vegetables in any form, and boiling even radishes. These open drains make themselves very evident in the hot weather, and though I will not vouch for the truth of the statement that in Nagasaki one is directed to one's destination by the second or third smell to the right, they are certainly one of the characteristics of the country.

All the large cities are provided with a water-supply, and modern sand filter-beds. In the Tokyo Exhibition the public are educated to the use of these beds by large glass models of plate cultures of *Bacillus prodigiosus* before and after the water has

been filtered. I looked in vain for something new in these filter-models; but no, the Japanese are excellent imitators, and they cannot create.

The house construction from a hygienic point of view leaves nothing to be desired. Imagine a light-framed wooden bungalow, whose walls and inner partitions are merely sliding panels. Of carpets, furniture, beds, curtains, and other germ-harbourers there are none. The inmates sit and sleep on the floor, which is covered with a rice-straw matting, taken up and aired daily. Every morning, if the day be fine, these panels are slid back, leaving the interior of the house open to the sun, light, and four winds of Heaven. This custom, though germicidal, is often resented by foreigners who may have overslept themselves. It is a little disconcerting to be thus discovered to the passers-by and to the other guests of the inn or tea-house. In the cold weather, the Japanese sleep on thick quilts called *futous*, laid on the matting floor, and cover themselves with others of the same kind, sometimes using two or three. These likewise are always to be seen airing in the sun.

It is marvellous how artistic they contrive to make these plain interiors. A gnarled beam or upright cut from a bent or twisted tree will often be left unplanned, with its knots carefully polished, and serves as a contrast to the rest of the structure; and a vase containing a single iris with its foliage, gives an effect which our own drawing-rooms, laden with bric-a-brac, cannot produce. The woodwork surrounding the panels is carved or polished, but there is no ornament of any kind, except on the 6- or 8-inch high platform of polished wood, where a kakimono is hung, and the one vase or bowl of flowers is displayed. Ten years is the average life of one of these houses, but as a village is generally destroyed by fire every few years, they seldom last long enough to become dilapidated.

Contrast these airy dwellings with one of our European houses, in which generations are born, live and die, and which are encumbered with all sorts of germ traps. I think we must admit that the former are infinitely more sanitary. The back yard, which in an English house is so often lumbered up with rubbish, is, in Japan, a dainty little garden, with diminutive trees, ornamental flowing water, and a rockery.

The Japanese certainly outdoes the Englishman in the cult of the morning tub. Every house of any pretensions has a wooden bath sunk in the floor of the back room, or sometimes in the front garden, where the major-domo and his family may be seen soaking

themselves, whilst neighbours come and chat. This custom is now being suppressed by the Japanese Government, who are passing through much the same stages of mental evolution as Adam and Eve after their eviction from Paradise; but such things may still be seen in the country districts. The face and head of a Japanese child is not a pleasing study, despite these lavations. I heard an American lady sum up the case rather well by remarking that "the Chinese wash *down* to their necks, and the Japanese *up* to them—there they stop." She added, "the missionaries could do more for young Japan with handkerchiefs and combs than with bibles"! It certainly is strange that a nation otherwise so cleanly should fall so far short in these two particulars. In regard to the head trouble, it has been offered in explanation that a dirty head is a sign of strength; that if a child's head is clean it must be a weakling.

I visited many of the thermal springs which abound in Japan. They contain varying amounts of sulphur, iron and salts, and are greatly patronised by people with rheumatism and specific diseases, also dysentery and leprosy. Some of the baths are extremely hot, often reaching 150° F., a temperature at which no European can venture in, but the natives seem to be inured to them, and soak themselves for hours at a time. At one of the hot springs in the hills, the village is left in charge of an old man during the three winter months. This amphibian is said to spend the whole season in the bath, with a stone on his lap to keep him from rising to the surface during sleep. He only emerges when the snow melts.

In regard to food, I think we have distinctly the better of them. Their diet of rice and fish is stodgy and insipid, and indigestion is almost a national complaint.

A prominent figure in Japanese domestic life is the village masseur, who is called in for almost every ache and pain and minor ailment. He is almost invariably blind, for a sightless man is said to have a more highly developed sense of touch and manipulation. It also gives employment to a class who would otherwise be dependent on the community. These men wander along the streets blowing a reed whistle to attract their patients. Their services are often requisitioned by Europeans, who declare that after a long day's tramp all sense of fatigue and stiffness is removed by their manipulations.

The greatest endemic scourge to Japan is undoubtedly beri-beri, which incapacitates almost as many men from honest labour as conscription. Notwithstanding the brilliant results achieved in their Navy by an improved diet in the prevention of this disease,

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the food theory is losing ground. In fact, a Japanese bacteriologist recently claimed to have confirmed Hamilton Wright's work in the Straits Settlements, maintaining that it is caused by a bacterial infection of the duodenum.

Their freedom from intestinal diseases during the late war they attribute to the substitution of large tea cauldrons for water carts, both in camp and at the firing line. I think that the practice of giving weak tea to troops in war time is worthy of trial in our own Army. By this means, a refreshing form of sterilised water can be prepared and served out in half an hour, and muddy water is made less conspicuous and more palatable.

Japanese medical officers have staff rank, and any non-compliance with their recommendations entails a written explanation to headquarters by the officer concerned. They certainly understand the advantages of prevention over treatment of disease.

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### Reports, &c.

#### NOTES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE OFFICERS' MESS IN A TEMPORARY HOSPITAL.

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL N. C. FERGUSON, C.M.G.  
*Royal Army Medical Corps.*

ON mobilisation of a field medical unit, the question of messing arrangements for his staff of officers, is one of the most difficult which confronts the much harassed commanding officer. And as the campaign proceeds and he loses his mess secretary and most of the original members, the mess tends to become bankrupt, or a quite unjustifiable accumulation of funds accrues. In either case the members are apt to become discontented. With a view to trying to obviate this unpleasant state of affairs, and of inviting discussion on this important subject, I submit the accompanying Mess Rules, which are the result of five years' evolution and of the careful thought of many officers of considerable experience.

Specimen account sheets are appended, which to officers unaccustomed to book-keeping will be a great help. They have been compiled with much ingenuity by Captain F. W. W. Dawson, R.A.M.C., and provide for every contingency.

The accompanying Mess Rules are suitable for a temporary mess, the equipment of which has to be paid for at once, and recovered by degrees from members who are constantly changing. In addition they provide :