

Written for this Paper.

## THE WILLIAM BOOTH OF JAPAN.

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HAVE just received two very curious sketches from Corea. They are made by a Japanese artist, and they illustrate the barbarities which the Chinese used in their treatment of the Japanese

prisoners. One of them shows how Lieut. Takenouchi, who was captured by the Chinese when in charge of an advance guard of twelve Japanese, was barbarously tortured. He was first dragged through the town by a string which was run through his nose. His hands were tied behind him, and a Chinaman held him back by a rope, which he jerked occasionally, in order to intensify the pain of the string through his nose, which was pulled by another Chinaman, who walked in front. Soldiers with flags and spears went along, and criers carried the heads of the Japanese privates, which had been cut off. After he had passed through the town of Pinyang his ears were cut off, and he was again led through the streets. At the third trip his nose had disappeared and what became of him after that no one knows. The dead were horribly mutilated by the Chinese, and the actions of the Japanese at Port Arthur were almost forced by the horrible treatment which both their living and their dead received from the Chinese soldiers and mob. When they entered Port Arthur they found the mutilated forms of their brothers lining the streets. Archways of Japanese heads, with the noses and ears missing, had been built over the streets, and the horrors of the treatment received by the Japanese spies at Nanking were repeated again and again at Port Arthur. It must be remembered that this was the culmination of work which has been going on by the Chinese since the beginning of this war, and it is a question whether American troops under the same circumstances would have acted much better. Up to the time of the Port Arthur massacre, the Japanese had treated the Chinese with the greatest kindness. They had not looted the people, and the Chinese prisoners as a rule preferred to stay with them rather than to go back to their own troops and be starved and ill-treated. The Red Cross Society of Japan had up to this time acted with fully as much charity and mercy as it has ever done in the wars of Europe. It is a wonderfully live organization. The emperor is its head, and the empress has done all she could to aid in its work and as far as I could see during my stay in Japan, it received better support from the people there than our Red Cross does here. I saw one curious instance of the charity of the Japanese people in regard to it. It was in connection with Donjuro, the famous Japanese actor, who is as celebrated there as Henry Irving is in England.

He is the Edwin Booth of Japan, and he owns the biggest theater of the empire. It is known as the Kabukiza Theater, and it will seat 3,000 people. It has a stock company. I venture, as large as that of any theater in New York, and its nightly receipts often run into the thousands of dollars. Well, this man Donjuro donated the receipts of his theater for one entire week for the benefit of the Red Cross hospital, and all of his actors threw in their services. They played from ten in the morning until about ten o'clock at night, and the house was packed. I had a box in the second gallery, which cost me seven dollars, and there were at least five thousand dollars in the house the day I attended. Suppose one of our greatest actors should donate the services of himself and his troupe to the Red Cross for a week, and you get some idea of what these actors did.

## JAPAN'S BIGGEST THEATER.

It takes a big house to seat 3,000 people. We have only one or two theaters that large in the United States, and we have none like that of Donjuro's. It has no chairs, and the people sit on the floor in little square pens about four feet wide. There is usually a little box of charcoal in the middle of each pen for the lighting of the pipes, and there is no objection to smoking. There is an immense pit and two galleries, and the walls in the summer are open, and it is more like a concert hall, than a theater. The stage is made in the shape of an immense wheel, which is turned by man power at the change of the scenes, and which moves one set of actors behind the scenes and brings another before you. The supes come on during the play to fix the clothes of the actors. They are dressed in black, and you are not supposed to see them. Right through one side of the house there is a boarded walk of the height of the stage, about five feet wide, which forms a part of the stage, and some of the actors will step off and come down on this walk above the audience and play their parts there. The acting is different from ours, but it is wonderfully strong in some respects. There are no better fencers in the world, and these people have a wonderful power of facial expression. The Japanese appreciate good acting. They roar with laughter over the comedies, and a strong piece of tragic acting brings shouts of applause, and the people tear off parts of their clothing and throw them onto the stage, expecting to redeem them with presents of money at the end of the play. There are no ticket offices, and you get your tickets at the tea houses nearby. Ladies bring their fine clothes to the tea houses sometimes and put them on there before they go in, and many order lunches sent in to them and eat during the acting. The plays begin in the morning and last until night. There shoes are all left outside in the hall, and on going in you pass by three or four thousand wooden clogs which are marked with checks. The Japanese women go bare-headed, and hence they have not the trouble about theater hats that we have in America.

## A CALL ON JAPAN'S GREATEST ACTOR.

I attended the theater in company with Mr. S. H. Tokioka, who is connected with the household department of the palace, and with him made a call upon the famous Donjuro. It was be-

tween the acts that we made our way down under the stage, and on through wheel after wheel until we came into the dressing room. In some of these there were actors half naked taking their siestas. In others they were making up the next act, and we had gone through over twenty. I judge, when we came into a little den looking out on a beautiful garden. It was a room about twelve feet square, and was carpeted with mats. The walls were filled with closets, and there were swords and different costumes lying about. In the middle of the room, lying on his elbow on the floor, was a long, thin, saw-toothed man, with as refined features as I have seen. He had bright eyes, a very high forehead, large ears, almond eyes and a very long face. His dress was the soul of simplicity. It consisted of a blue cotton kimono. This was the great actor Donjuro. He rose on his knees as we entered and bowed gracefully in Japanese style. We got on our knees and bowed our heads on the floor, and then sat on the floor and chatted for a short time about Japanese art and acting. Mr. C. D. Weldon, the well-known American artist, was with, and he and Donjuro had quite a discussion over art topics, and the great actor was surprised to find how well the art of Japan had become known to our famous artists and especially to Mr. Weldon, who is perhaps the best posted foreigner on the art of Japan in the world today. Donjuro is an artist as well as an actor, and he makes me think of Joe Jefferson in his many accomplishments. He is a man of the highest culture. He stands well in Japanese literature, and he writes poetry. He made some remarks as to the difference the Japanese and the American stage, declaring in favor of the former, and he said that he was really sorry that he could not accept the generous offer which he had to come to America and act at Chicago during the World's Fair. He afterward sent me his photograph, writing his autograph below it, and I found that there was just as much demand for the pictures of actors in Japan as in America, and that the people had their favorites.

## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH A JAPANESE COMEDIAN.

Leaving Donjuro I made a call on Shinzo San, who is one of Donjuro's favorite pupils, and who is, perhaps, the brightest of the younger Japanese comedians. He received us in his dressing room. He had to go on the stage within a few moments, and he made up for his part while he chatted. His gown was pulled down to his waist, and he was absolutely naked as to the upper part of his body. He squatted on his knees before a little glass on the floor, painting and patching and turning himself from a modern Japanese gentleman into a bridegroom of the olden time. He had his servants to help him, but he did the most of the work himself in the most artistic way, painting his arms and his eyes and his neck, and patching up his head so that he looked like an old Daimio. He finally put on a gorgeous suit of light blue silk, and stood before us as the hero of the dual marriage, or, as it might be called, of the play which is known in Japan as "The Knight of the One Pantaloen." As he stood there I happened to remark that I wished that I could have a picture of him. Whereupon he replied: "Why don't you take it? There is my camera."