

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ONE OF CHINA'S GREAT PROBLEMS.

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THE backwardness of the Chinese in all questions relating to the study of modern scientific methods is deplorable. This is especially true of medical science. But as the result of nearly a century of medical work carried on by western medical practitioners, China is now accepting western civilization in its many phases. But probably nowhere has this change effected such a revolution in ideas and customs as in the medical field. The stage of pioneering has largely passed, and gradually an atmosphere of receptiveness has been created. This change of mind in China has naturally wrought a change in the scope of the medical work done by the western practitioners. During this period the conditions in which medical work had to be done were discouraging. Yet very much has been done in the medical and surgical treatment of millions of patients. Much has also been done in the way of medical research. But to treat all the sick and wounded of China under present conditions is obviously an impossible task. No foreign agencies can do more than touch the fringe of the problem. 200,000 doctors are needed in China, of whom there are less than 2,000 at the present time. With medical science much more exact and exacting than formerly, the number of cases under one doctor must be greatly reduced. How meet the problem of the ever-increasing number of patients? This can only be met in one of two ways, either by sending many more foreign doctors or by training thousands of Chinese youths in the science of western medicine. A certain increase in the number of foreign doctors in China will be necessary for years to come, chiefly for the purpose of training Chinese leaders, who will be able to commence the solution of China's great physical problem.

The above is also true of the dental situation in China. China has had multitudes of native practitioners, who have attempted to do something to relieve the ills of her people. But who ever heard of a native dentist? Moreover, to meet the oral needs of 400,000,000 of Chinese the number of qualified dentists from abroad is almost negligible.

Then there is the formidable problem of public health. China can make little substantial progress until she begins to solve this fundamental problem. Insanitary China needs a revolution of ideas, customs and life. Ignorance, prejudice and superstition have to be removed, and for this purpose outside help is absolutely essential.

So important is the medical situation and so great is the opportunity for medical education in China, that the Rockefeller Foundation has established a China Medical Board, with a resident director in Peking.