

immigrants. On the other hand, the Chinese constantly increase, despite a policy of non-intercourse with foreigners. The Americans have, in a civilization dating back to 1492, already begun to show signs of decadence, and are only saved by constant immigration. China has a civilization of thousands of years, and is increasing in population every day, yet her doctors and their methods are ridiculed by Americans. The people have many sayings here, one of which is, 'The proof of the pudding lies in the eating.' It seems applicable to this case."—*Jour. A. M. A.*

Patenting Instruments by the Profession.

The recent discussion on this subject has directed attention anew to this vexed question. There are sentimental reasons which will lead the profession to avoid patenting instruments, though the equity of such a rule is more than doubtful. If there is any justice in copyrighting a book, it would seem to be equally just to patent an invention. Both are the product of individual effort, a sort of activity that the State protects. The feeling on the part of physicians that all instruments and means devised by them should be open to the whole profession has led to an objection to patenting instruments.

In many instances this has been disastrous, there having been no more striking example of it than the Murphy button. This instrument as originally devised contained a spring. The whole value of the instrument lay in the exact adjustment of the tension of this spring. This was carefully worked out by Dr. Murphy, so that when the button was in position it should produce sufficient pressure on the opposed edges of the peritoneum to cause pressure atrophy, but without cutting through and without causing necrosis. After the button was placed on the market it was copied by instrument makers, who, observing that the two halves of the button were connected by a spring, simply used one of about the same strength and size. The result was a number of imperfect buttons were and are upon the market. There is no telling how many lives have been lost by the failure of Dr. Murphy to patent the button.

Dr. Porter, at the last meeting of the American Medical Editors' Association, told of an interesting experience. He devised at one time a stethoscope which was extensively copied by instrument makers, but the cost of the product was cheapened at the expense of quality in the instrument. These cheaper patterns finally displaced the product of the original maker, so that the stethoscope as originally devised is no longer on the market. The result is that Dr. Porter recommends to his classes a stethoscope devised by a physician who patented the article.