

NOTES FROM THE CAROLINE A. LADD HOSPITAL.

By JAMES HUNTER WELLS, M.D., Surgeon-in-Charge, Pyengyang, Korea.

Westward the course of Empire takes its way and westward into the Far East the altruistic and beneficent efforts of medical missionaries have gone healing and carrying the practice of Western medicine.

The necessity of scientific medicine in the Far East is apparent even to a superficial observer and when we look deeper and find what constitutes the principles and practice of medicine in even the most advanced of Eastern nations we are horrified and hear the cry, "Come and help us."

The first account we have of doctors in Korea was about three thousand years ago when Kija, a Chinese prince, came over from Peking with five thousand followers, including musicians, merchants, artists, etc. The crude practice of those days has not improved much during the centuries since. Here still mystery and secrets, along with an assumption of profound wisdom by the so-called doctor are the essentials of treatment. They do, however, lay much stress on the pulse and examine it with much pretension.

In the surgical line there is almost nothing sensible done. However, it is sometimes quite surprising what correct knowledge of conditions they have; for instance, there is in Korea, as we might expect, considerable suffering from prolapsus. Now they have figured out that if the passage can be made smaller then the prolapse will be prevented; so that in several of these cases, that I have seen, they have resorted to burning of the canal and by the resulting cicatrix and contraction the prolapse has been prevented. Their method of accomplishing this was to insert burning rags soaked in oil and as no anesthetic was used one may

imagine the horrible pain and suffering beside the loss of life. Their method of treating all wounds is by coating them with some black mass thus excluding the air, but unfortunately often sealing in infection. It would take too long to tell of the many crude and strange things done in various troubles, but it is sufficient to say that nothing is done right, altho there is frequently a remote reason for their methods, which seems to point to proper procedure.

In the drug line they come nearer, shall I say, to our guesswork, for we all have different ideas about the efficiency of certain drugs. Undoubtedly the main drug of great benefit introduced to Asia by Western doctors is quinin and it is sold by the thousand boxes. So great was the demand that the first missionaries, not doctors, bought it in large quantities and sold it thru itinerant preachers and tract distributors, thus helping to pay their expenses.

One of the obstacles every educated medical man meets frequently, is some good soul, usually a woman who has conceived the notion that they must administer to the bodies of these poor people. Usually the qualification of these good persons consists in only a three months' course in a Bible school, where some simple nursing is also taught, and it is needless to say that their administration is far from effective to the patient, nor beneficial to Western medicine.

Another great drug coming close in importance to quinin is iodid of potassium. I have found hereditary syphilis so very common that the iodid has to be used constantly. The longer I stay in Asia the more I recognize, or think that I do, evidences of attenuated syphilis; especially is the third stage markedly prevalent. The Chinese long ago recognized the virtue of mercury and used it freely, but of the iodids for the more developed forms they knew nothing. I can recall some who would now be blind and diseased badly, if it had not been for this beneficent remedy. We have used salvarsan, but it is not as practical in our work as the older remedies. Acting on the method of the United States Army doctors in Colorado I have succeeded in curing several cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, by the hypodermic

use of mercury. Hydrarg. succinamid was the preparation used and the result in my cases very satisfactory.

In my experience of eighteen years in Korea there has been no difficulty at all in introducing modern methods. I have trained several men who have received government certificates to practise and they are doing creditable work. One was a trained doctor according to the Chinese and Korean practice and with some of the old and more of the new methods he is very well qualified and is doing excellent work.

Two events have led to medical advance in Korea. First, the introduction of Christianity which cares always for physical ailments as well as spiritual ones; and secondly, the teaching of medical sociology thru the students whom we have trained, for not only are they taught the art of healing in its newest form, but the preventive and sociologic phases as well. They are also taught the dangers of the opiates and alcohol which, unfortunately, have been introduced to them without such warning. For instance, I have demonstrated to my students in desperate cases of cholera collapse and other emergencies that alcohol is not so good as some simpler and less dangerous remedies, and that the morphin habit must always be remembered in prescribing. Personally, I advocate the use of but few drugs. The introduction of Western medicine and surgery into Asia and other Eastern lands is one of the most beneficent works of modern Christian civilization. On the other hand, we can be greatly benefited by adopting some of their practices of politeness and good manners, especially their outdoor manners, which greatly excel those of the Western world.

In a more general way the introduction of Western medicine into Asia has been of enormous benefit to the countries-at-large. In Korea, for instance, the Japanese have recognized the splendid influence and the necessity of medical work, so that they have established hospitals, charity and pay combined, in all the large cities. As many of these cities already had hospitals and dispensaries established by the missionaries, we now have both kinds. In most cases very amicable relations exist between the Japanese doctors in charge of the government hospitals and the missionary doctors in charge of the others.

So far we have had the most scientific and advanced medical practice in the West and have given it freely to the slumbering East and they have accepted it in splendid style, but don't let us make the mistake of thinking that we know it all and will hold the ascendancy. The patience, care and observation of these quiet investigators will, in the end, place them high in medical ranks.

The chief benefit to them has not been the simple practice of medicine and surgery, but the great principles of prevention and sanitation, and in teaching hygiene the medical missionaries have done and are doing a great work. The first book that I put into the Korean language was an Introduction to Hygiene and it still holds the record for the best seller. Then it is a remarkable fact that when they once know what scientific sanitation is, they do not hesitate to carry it out no matter how difficult!

The Japanese should be given great credit for their advanced work in all prevention schemes. They have introduced and established water works, drainage and clean streets in Korea, besides other modern life-saving devices. The whole influence of the medical missionary in Asia has been so important along these splendid lines that the Academy does well in commending them.