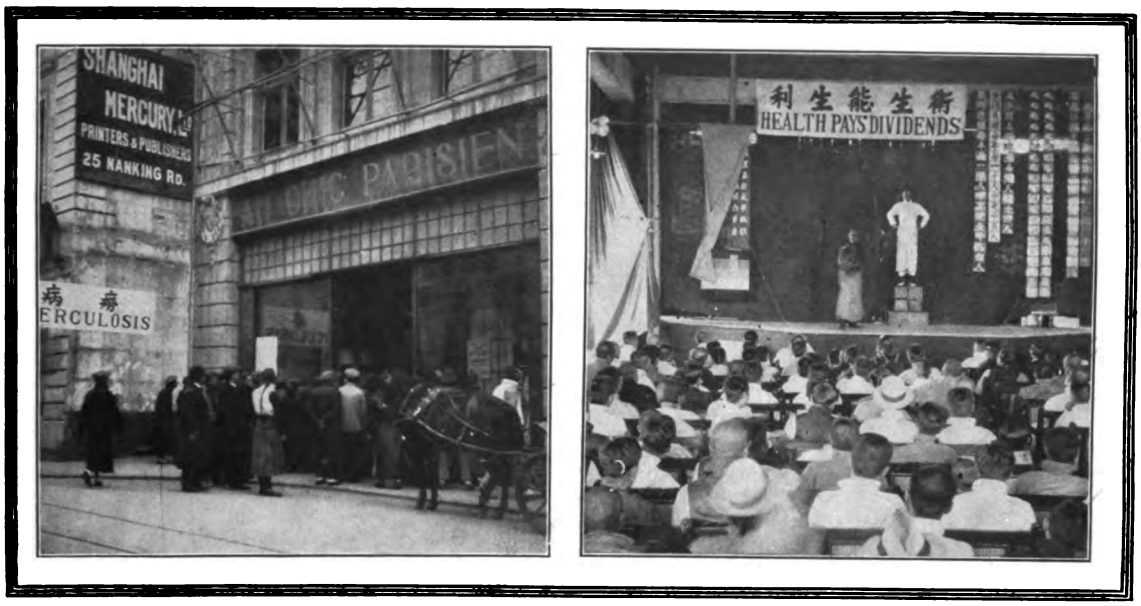


WHERE 19,000 CHINESE STUDIED THE HEALTH EXHIBIT IN THREE DAYS

The native photographer who took the picture to the left charged $9 for it and one other view, because the crowds of Chinese, eager to get in to see the exhibit, trampled over him and his camera, and then the police ran him off for obstructing traffic. Afterward he persuaded the police to drive the crowd away long enough for him to make two exposures. (*Right:*) "China Surmounting Its Burden of Disease." The full story of the little health drama of which this is the climax is told on page 553

AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN-DIPLOMAT IN CHINA

Dr. W. W. Peter and the Remarkable Success of His Original Methods of Converting the Chinese to Sanitary Reform—A New Way to Stop the Spread of Oriental Diseases to the United States

BY

FRENCH STROTHER

(*Our international relations, as a result of our entry into the World War, have taken first rank in interest in American minds. And though our instant problem is our relations with Europe, forehanded men see that, the moment the war stops, the Orient will become the gravest problem of our foreign policy, for Asia is the last stronghold of autocracy. Hence the importance of Dr. Peter's work, which is profoundly affecting public opinion in China, favorably to us.*—THE EDITORS.)

DR. W. W. PETER and the President of China met on two occasions, the second of which may well be one of the turning points in the history of the world. That sounds ambitious—but one moment. Their first meeting was on a day in 1912, in a city in central China. Dr. Peter was the Red Cross physician-surgeon in charge of a little hospital in Wuchang. The future President, Li Yuan Hung, was the general commanding the armies of the revolutionists who later forced the Manchus to abdicate the Dragon Throne. One evening a native messenger aroused Dr. Peter with the news that a whole company of Li's soldiers had been poisoned, and were dying in their barracks up the street. The doctor hastily gathered all the emetics and all the purgatives in his stock and hurried after the messenger to save their lives if he could. He

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DR. PETER (LEFT) AND THE "STAGE PROPERTIES" OF HIS HEALTH LECTURE IN CHINA

By means of these ingenious mechanical devices, Dr. Peter has made intelligible to thousands of China's leaders the outstanding facts of hygiene and public health. Several of these machines are described in the article herewith

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"TWO CLASSES OF PEOPLE"

In his health lecture, Dr. Peter sets on a table a lamp the chimney on which is black with smoke, and asks one of his Chinese auditors to read from a newspaper by this light. Of course, the Chinese cannot see. Then he produces a similar lamp with a clean chimney and repeats the request. With this bit of symbolism caught by the audience, he produces these faces of "Two Classes of People," the one those whose view of life and effect on others is bad because they have darkened their light with bad health, and the other those whose lives and faces shine with the light of well-being

found a great dark room filled with Chinese soldiers in every stage of distress. There was no telling what poison had been used. Something must instantly be done. He mixed two pitchers full of medicine—one a powerful emetic, the other an equally energetic purgative. He then had the captain of the company order the least sick of his men to assemble in a line, and a coolie marched down the column, giving each man a teacupful of the emetic. Each man was ordered to fall out and get out—out of doors—after he had taken his dose, and to come back in ten minutes. Soon the barracks were emptied. Not much later the men returned, likewise and also! The line reformed, and the coolie went down it again, with the same teacup and the other pitcher in hand. Those who were very sick received individual attention.

And Dr. Peter left as fast as he had come. For he heard, between groans, round Chinese curses on the foreign devil who had given them the drafts. It was bad enough to be poisoned, was the sense of these rumblings, but the pangs they had suffered from the disease were nothing to those caused by the cure.

Nevertheless, none of the soldiers died. Hence General Li's invitation of a few days later, that Dr. Peter call and receive his thanks. They were duly given, with a medal besides.

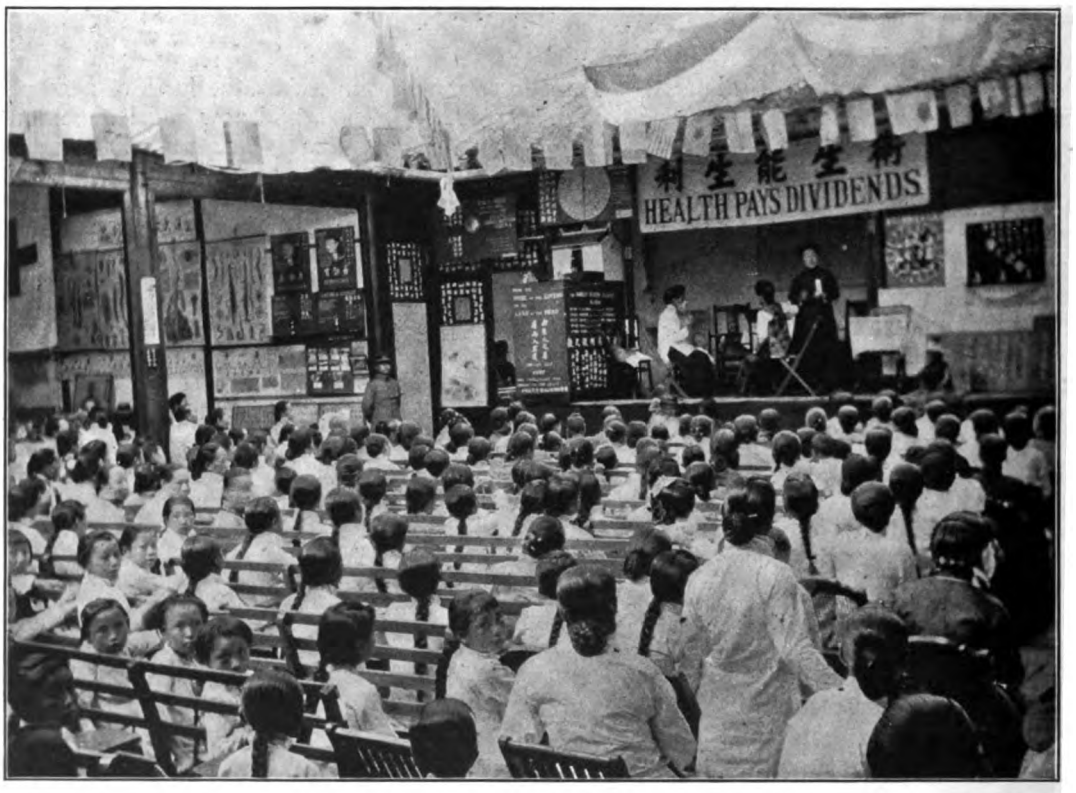
Five years passed. Yuan Shih-kai had sat in the President's chair of the first Republic of China, had tried to restore the Imperial power with himself as the head of a new dynasty, had failed, and now had left behind in this world his more than twenty wives and seventy children while he journeyed through the hells and heavens of the shadow-land beyond the Chinese River Styx. General Li came to the Presidential chair. The fugitive leader of the motley revolutionists of the South now stood within the Temple of Heaven in Peking, the northern seat of national power. He was ruler of the oldest and most populous nation on the globe. Four hundred million people acknowledged his claim to power.

Again Dr. Peter happened to be near and to fall under his eye. No longer the doctor at a lonely inland post, he was now the apostle of a national health service for all China that should lift from this people the curse of its yearly scourge of smallpox, typhoid, and the plague. Backed by the Young Men's Christian Association of America, encouraged and supported by provincial governors and mandarins and literati, speaking daily to eager thousands in the greatest Chinese cities, he had carried the message of sanitation up and down China until his reputation was nation-wide among the Chinese of education and leading. He was speaking in Peking when word came that the President would be pleased to receive him. He went, with an appointment for half an hour. The thirty minutes were quickly gone in explanations of the mean-

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DR. PETER, WITH MR. REINSCH (THE AMERICAN MINISTER) AND CHINESE OFFICIALS



MOTHERS' DAY AT A CHINESE HEALTH MEETING

The lecture is usually on "How to Take Care of Your Baby." It is so popular that it had to be given four times in one day in one city visited by Dr. Peter. Part of the demonstration consists in bathing an infant correctly in view of the audience. In this city the impression got abroad that one baby was used at all four lectures. To bathe a baby at all in the winter the Chinese considered almost sure to be fatal, and, of course, four baths in one day was certain doom. The mistake was corrected, but a month after the meeting closed, the principal Chinese paper reported to its readers, as an important piece of news, that "the four babies bathed during Dr. Peter's meetings last month are still alive"

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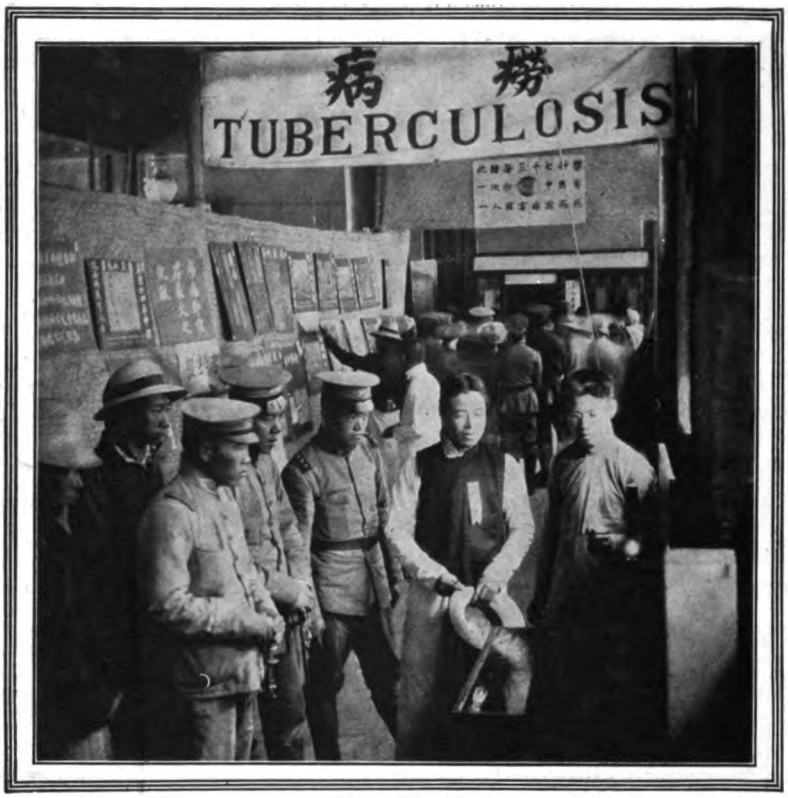
THE HEALTH EXHIBIT READY FOR TRAVEL



INSIDE A HALL WITH THE HEALTH EXHIBIT

The two and one half tons of apparatus and wall exhibits shown in the upper picture have accompanied Dr. Peter 22,000 miles through China, chiefly by houseboat and cart. The lecture which they illustrate has been delivered 600 times, and in all the principal Chinese cities. The gong over the door in the background of the lower picture bears the inscription, in Chinese and in English: "Each toll of this bell announces one death from consumption in China—852,348 every year, 2,335 every day, 97 every hour, one every thirty-seven seconds." The exhibits are marked in English as well as Chinese because the native students like to see the foreign writing

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SOLDIERS IN PEKING STUDYING A HEALTH EXHIBIT

An acetylene candle, operated by one of Dr. Peter's trained assistants, to illustrate the special care that must be taken of babies and old people to prevent their lives being snuffed out

ing of sanitation to the health and national progress of China. The President's secretary came to him and said the President would be pleased to extend the interview another thirty minutes. Those gone, the time was again extended. Altogether for an hour and a half, Li listened to the story of a movement to make China strong.

That story has been told by Dr. Peter more than two hundred times to more than one hundred and fifty thousand of the foremost citizens of China, invariably at their request and at their expense. It is a story that is altering not alone the history of China; it will soon alter the history of the world—the United States included. For example:

Last summer, several cases of anthrax were discovered in Boston. Anthrax is a fearful disease of cattle, communicable to man, that affects the spleen, lungs, or intestines and ultimately the blood, causes disfiguring swellings on the body, and usually ends in death. Where did the Boston anthrax come from? The answer involves the pampas of Argentina, the assassination of the Hapsburg heir by a Serbian peasant in a Herzegovinian village, and a tanyard in Hankow. Boston is the port at which the hides are landed for the use of the shoe factories at Lynn and Brockton. These hides used to come, clean and sanitary, from the Argentine. Then came the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the war in Europe, the distressed shipping schedules to and from South America, and the substitution of Chinese hides for Argentinian.

Now enters the foreman of the tanyard in Hankow. A foreigner, inspecting his place, asks him why the regulations of the United States Consular Service are not followed when he packs his hides for shipment. In harsh Chinese the foreman inquires to know why he should waste time and money dipping his hides in an evil-smelling liquor just because some foreign devil strings together absurd characters that read backward—from left to right instead of right to left, like civilized Chinese printing.. Never!

Hence he ships hides infested with *Bacillus Anthracis*—and *Bacillus Anthracis* does not die when exposed to sun and fresh air, as do other deadly germs. Hence several Americans dead in Boston, who probably never heard of Hankow.

So the national health of China concerns the whole world. It is no mere figure of speech to say that the world's history will be affected. The Black Death of the 14th Century which destroyed twenty million lives in Europe was China's contribution to the most tragic page of English and French and Italian history in the Middle Ages. The horror of that slaughter of the innocents has not been forgotten to this day. China has in all history been the great plague spot of the world. The bubonic plague, which is still being fought in California and Louisiana, came from China. Five years ago, the pneumonic plague des-

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troyed fifty thousand lives in three months in Manchuria, and threatened to sweep the world. China is the native home of smallpox.

And if she has scourged the world from her isolation, what will be when she joins the company of the nations, as she soon will do? Probably within the lifetime of this generation the centre of gravity of international politics will shift from Europe to the western shore of the Pacific, and China will be in full commercial intercourse with all mankind—and disease follows trade.



POLICEMEN LOOKING AT A HEALTH EXHIBIT IN TIEN-TSIN.
As the police are charged with the execution of health regulations, Dr. Peter always makes sure of their interest when he carries out a health campaign in a Chinese city

It is as much to forestall the menace of this plague upon the world as to help China itself that Dr. Peter has traveled twenty-two thousand miles up and down China, telling these people "The Relation of National Health to National Strength." That is the title of his lecture. It sounds a little dull to us, but it is joined to the psychology of the Chinese of to-day in a way easy to understand. Every intelligent Chinese knows that China has fallen behind in the race of the nations. He also knows that this most numerous of all peoples, the oldest in its civilization, infinitely rich in the very resources that its modern rivals have used to reach to power (iron and coal and forests), a people inferior to none in intelligence, unmatched in patience and industry and thrift—that this great race lacks something which has put it at the mercy of peoples contemptibly its inferior in numbers and history. That something is the "national" idea, "national" strength. China is a race, but it never has been a nation. They are eager to know how China may become a nation—what is the secret of national cohesion, what is "national strength."

Thus Dr. Peter's lecture is as popular in China as Dr. Russel Conwell's "Acres of Diamonds" is on the Chautauqua circuit in the Corn Belt. It "hits the spot." And, to tell the truth, it would "go" in America. For probably no such a lecture was ever devised for an audience of serious people. It is really a traveling show, two and a half tons of exhibits and ingenious apparatus designed to make plain to any man with eyes the vast practical meaning of some Western abstract ideas. Fourteen mechanics are kept busy building new "stage properties" to be used with the lecture. Two intelligent Chinese mechanics go with Dr. Peter to manipulate these weird but effective things before his audiences. They are his "Man Fridays," only, being two, he calls one "Friday" and the other "Saturday."

For example: Having his platform set like a stage, Dr. Peter stands before two black curtains suspended upon wires and meeting behind his back. Facing his Chinese audience, he tells them he has come, upon their invitation, to tell them what physical health has to do with the "national strength" of China. They have told him that China is weak, that China lags behind in the race of the nations,

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A MIDSUMMER ADDRESS IN NANKING

Dr. Peter is here lecturing on tuberculosis, illustrating his talk with the device pictured below. Every eight seconds the little figure of a man opens the door of the house, comes outside, and falls into the coffin—a pantomimic dramatization of the fact that the world mortality from tuberculosis averages one death every eight seconds. The cone-shaped mound is the Chinese conventional symbol of death

where each one is striving to make its full contribution to the world's industry and art, science and education, wealth and happiness, and they have asked him why. There are many reasons, but he is fully acquainted with only one—and that, one of the foremost.

"Let us have that race run, here, upon this platform."

Then from between the curtains a poorly dressed man with a load comes forward. On seeing him Dr. Peter says to the audience:



"This man represents China. Now here is another man, dressed in Western costume but also with a load. Let him represent Japan [a Chinese audience of to-day always picks up its ears when Japan is mentioned] or America, or England—any Western nation. Now, China carries this unusually heavy burden in its race, a great bag, loaded full of something hidden by the cord tied round its neck.

"Now," continues Dr. Peter, "all Western nations bear this same bur-

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den, but they have vastly lightened it. Note the difference."

"Now for the race. Ready!" cries Dr. Peter. "On your mark! Go!"

The men run across the stage, but "Japan," lightly burdened, quickly leaves behind "China," who staggers under his big, heavy bag. Dr. Peter greets the victor, who disappears.

"Now I will show you the burden China has to carry in the race," says Dr. Peter, as he unties the bag. Out he pulls a great beam of heavy wood painted red, and the audience reads upon it, in big black Chinese ideographs, the symbol that means "Plague." Into the bag again, and out comes another, "Smallpox." Another: "Typhoid." And another and another. As each beam is read it is passed back through the curtain from Friday to Saturday.

No audience can escape—or forget—the meaning of that little drama. But it has another act.

"Would you like to see what China would look like, ready for the race, if it, too, threw off this burden of disease and death from its shoulders?"

And then the black curtains sweep aside and there is a Chinese athlete, lithe and strong, poised for the race, standing with his feet upon, and spurning, the beams that had been in the heavy bag upon the other racer's shoulders. The tableau never fails to get a roar of applause—and after the applause a sudden utter silence as the full meaning of the picture fills the minds of the spectators.

Dr. Peter's message has often been challenged. Remember, he does not address the coolies of China, but the flower of the nation. These men are governors of provinces as big as Ohio and as populous as New York, of cities comparable to Chicago and Philadelphia; the modern successors of the martial Kublai Khan and Ghengis Khan; the heirs of the subtle Confucius and Lao-tze; descendants in intellect and learning of the men who invented the printing press and gunpowder, the compass and the astrolabe. Hence, at one of his meetings, Dr. Peter came a cropper. He had waxed eloquent upon the man-saving power of sanitation, when a venerable pundit rose in the audience and challenged his argument.

"Pardon me, Dr. Peter," he said, in Chinese, "but may I interrupt? Your logic is all very well for America, with its hundred million people scattered over a great continent, or for France, with its seventy millions. But China—*ssu-pai wan*! [Four hundred million!] China has too many men already!"

And Dr. Peter had no answer. But he did not rest until he had found the answer, nor then until he had got his fourteen cunning artificers to make another two hundred pounds of weird apparatus to add to his platform equipment. And ever afterward he had a striking answer to this objection—for this objection was made at nearly every city. Beside him on the platform thenceforward have stood two tables, seemingly bare, even of a cover, but painted, one red, one yellow. Behind the red one, which represents Europe, stands "Friday"; behind the other, standing for Asia, "Saturday." Another venerable pundit rises to make his argument that China should not save lives because China already has more lives than it needs.

"But," objects Dr. Peter, "according to your logic, it is not the number of people that matters; it is the number per square *li*." [A *li* is the Chinese mile, one ninth as large as ours.]

"Quite so," assents the Chinese sage.

"Then how many people per *li* do you imagine live in these Western lands? I have studied that and know. What country in Europe do you choose?"

"England."

"Good! Now how many people per square *li* would you say there are in England?"

"Maybe ten; perhaps eleven."

"No. I will show you. Here on these tables you see rows of ten slots each. Each table stands for a square *li*. You shall see how many people, on an average, live upon every square *li* in England."

Whereupon "Friday" pulls a concealed lever and up jump forty manikins in four rows, like tin soldiers. Extension legs at the back of the table tilt it forward so the audience can see.

"Forty per *li* in England!" exclaims Dr. Peter. "Name another country."

"Germany."

"How many?"

"Twenty."

"No—thirty-six." And up pop other rows of manikins, thirty-six of them. Here Dr. Peter takes the initiative.

"Let us see Holland." Additional rows stand up. "Fifty-three per *li* in Holland.

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Belgium—before the war. Seventy-three per *li*."

"Now let us examine the Asiatic countries. Twenty-eight per square *li* in Japan. And only twenty per square *li* in India. Think of it!"

"So! So!" exclaims the audience, "but China! How many in China."

"Ah!" Dr. Peter says. "I am told you do not believe in any census of China except the *Min-djen-bu*. Well, according to the *Min-djen-bu*, China has nine people per *li*." Nine lonely manikins appear.

"Nine!" incredulously from the audience. Then a chorus: "In all China—Yes. But who lives in the Desert of Gobi? Who lives in Tibet? We mean China Proper."

"Very well," Dr. Peter replies, "The eighteen provinces, then. Twenty-three per square *li*." The nine manikins disappear and twenty-three pop up. The audience is dumb. Dr. Peter presses his advantage.

"Take your most populous province, if you like. What is that?"

"Shan-tung!" the audience shouts as one man, their hope renewed, for this province is famous the world over for its density of population.

"Shan-tung," echoes Dr. Peter. The row of twenty-three little figures drop out of sight and up come——

"Fifty-nine per *li*," announces Dr. Peter, "against seventy-eight per *li* in Belgium." Even "Saturday" is grinning now. That argument about "too many men in China" has been spiked again.

"Saturday" has seen city after city in China taught the gospel of sanitation, but though he has been behind the stage properties of this medical evangelism and helped make the wheels go round, he has never lost a particle of his enthusiasm for the work, and with his fellow, "Friday," counts it the fun of life to serve the Doctor on his travels. "I hope you have slept well?" is his anxious query every morning, quickly followed by "Friday's" unweariedly eager, "Breakfast is waiting: may you enjoy it!"

Speaking of "wheels going round"—another piece of symbolism in mechanical disguise is this: The black curtains will be opened and Dr. Peter will say to his auditors—"spectators" is a better word, for he gets these people by having them "listen with their eyes" [a Canadian colleague in China, since he has gone to teach soldiers in England, has proved by demonstration that 85 per cent of all knowledge is gained through the eye and only 15 per cent. through ear-nose-tongue-finger senses combined. And that three tenths of eye-received-knowledge is permanently remembered and only seven tenths lost, whereas in hearing only one tenth is remembered. Dr. Peter, then, will say to his eye-hearers: "That big wheel there, on which are painted the words Progress, Freedom, National Health, and National Strength, represents China's advance. Now, how shall we make China advance, how make that wheel go round? Those little figures of men you see in front of the great wheel, each with his hands upon a crank that bears upon its axle, are the different classes of your people. One man represents your public officers, another your learned men, a third your merchants, a fourth your workmen, and so on. Now I will show you how these classes of your people go about their tasks to-day."

At a signal, "Friday" switches on the current from a bank of storage batteries, and the manikins begin to move, every one turning his little crank around and 'round.

"What?" Dr. Peter exclaims. "All are working, but the great wheel does not turn! But no wonder. Look at the merchants—they are turning one way while the officials are turning another. And the learned men are not turning in time with either. Nor the laborers with any of the rest. How can China advance, how can the great wheel turn, when the men who should turn it work like that?"

At a signal, "Friday" switches off the current.

"But suppose they worked differently. Let us try again."

Changing to a second piece of apparatus, which seems to be an exact duplicate of the first, he repeats the signal.

Again the manikins begin their turning, but this time every one bends in unison with his neighbors, every back is straight at once, then all are bowed together. And the great wheel begins slowly but steadily to revolve.

"See! The wheel is turning. China advances—because all her men are working in coöperation. That is the secret of 'National Strength.'"

The black curtains draw again together, and while "Friday" and "Saturday" bring

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out new apparatus, Dr. Peter continues his address:

"How, then, shall we get all China working together to gain National Health—that great element of National Strength? Here are a heap of stones [they are, in reality, big blocks of wood brought out by "Friday" and "Saturday."] I will let you name these stones of coöperation for National Health, and as you name them, we will build our foundation up. As each stone is added, I will place on top of the pile the cap-stone of National Health, and if the foundation is complete, the cap-stone will become luminous and shine on China. What is the most necessary foundation?"

"Money," some one calls from the audience.

"Good!" cries Dr. Peter, and his men put in the centre of the stage the first stone, the block so turned that it exposes a painted side bearing the symbol which means Money.

"I will set the cap-stone of Public Health upon this stone, and if Public Opinion is enough, Public Health will shine on China. No, it is still dark. What other stone is necessary?"

"Law."

"Yes, Law—the law that regulates life and the diseases. Place that under the stone of Money. Will Public Health now shine? Still dark! What other stone?"

"Education."

"Yes, Education in sanitary things. But still no light from Public Health: What else?"

"Public Opinion."

"Add Public Opinion. Now Public Health shines on China!"

And sure enough, the cap-stone bursts into a brilliant glow—prosaically enough done with a 100-candle-power electric bulb inside a box with translucent sides, but magically convincing in its effect in carrying home the symbolism to the spectators' minds.

By such devices as these, aided by the eagerness of the Chinese themselves to learn and by the prestige of the authorities, who are always the patrons of his campaigns, Dr. Peter has so greatly impressed upon the people the necessity of sanitation that his work has become nationally significant. In one city, for example, the average number of Chinese who applied at the foreign dispensary for vaccination jumped from ninety a day before his visit to eight hundred a day after he left. At each of his meetings during his five-day campaigns he addresses several thousand of the leading people of the community—the officials, the mandarins, the police, the gentry, the merchants, and the university students and faculty. One day is set apart for lectures for the women. And at every campaign, from five to thirty thousand people inspect the health exhibits which are arranged outside the lecture room, and ask questions of the squad of carefully coached university students who answer all inquiries about infections, prevention of disease, care of the sick, eradication of flies, mosquitoes, and other disease-bearing insects.

But in the international significance of Dr. Peter's work lies its chief interest for Americans. The menace to us of China's terrible infections is a grave danger. And what Mr. Franklin K. Lane said about the German menace is equally true of this: "If we don't go fight the Germans in Europe, we shall have to fight them on American soil." If we don't go fight China's plagues in China, we shall have to fight them in America. And it is a lot less costly in American money and American lives to fight them in China—for if we educate the Chinese, they will fight them for us and not only fight but pay the big bills besides.

Nor is the political effect a negligible consideration. China has long counted us its best friend—because we have not sought territory and because we were generous in the return of the Boxer indemnity. If, to these reasons for good-will, we add the vast permanent constructive reform of the physical conditions of human life in China, we shall earn—and doubtless receive—the lasting gratitude of the most populous nation. And we shall, at no distant date, in the Orient need a friend.

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