

Opportunities for Nursing in China.*

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In the few minutes in which I may speak to you, I want to tell you of the great opportunity for, and the great need of, the trained nurse in the foreign mission field, to interest you, if I can, in missions. To do this, I must speak to you of the only portion of the foreign mission field of which I have any practical knowledge, which is China.

You've all doubtless heard a great deal of the awakening of China, heard her characterised as a monster, stretching herself and opening her eyes after sleeping a thousand years. You may know that her people call her "Djung Gueh," which means the middle kingdom, and in former times thought of her as enclosed in a huge circle, touching on all sides the extreme limit of a square, flat world, leaving four small corners, "Mai Gueh" or outside kingdoms, inhabited by barbarians, and as long as China retains her present mode of writing and her ancient literature, just so long will she continue to consider all westerners as barbarians, from a literary standpoint, as possessing that only too utterly new to be of any real value.

But during the last ten years, the student class in China has been rapidly opening its eyes to the fact that there are other pursuits than the literary, worthy of their attention. China is calling in men from our great colleges and from England to teach the young men in her government schools—modern languages, chemistry, athletics—she is calling in foreigners to instruct her officers and drill her armies. These facts are due to many sources, but largely, though often indirectly, to the army of foreign workers within the empire, labouring unceasingly to broaden and give direction to her awakening energies. Travel among the upper classes is growing to be as much the vogue as it was the vogue fifty years ago not to know of anything outside the Chinese Empire.

Hand in hand with this progress has come the building of hospitals, more or less on the plan of hospitals of this country to-day. These hospitals are monuments to the tireless energy of a few physicians. They were built for the most part by money given in this country, by people who believed, as did the physicians, that if hospitals were placed where the need is so dire, there would be those willing and anxious

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to go out and man them, making them the efficient weapons they should be against ignorance and disease—an educational and beneficent influence to all who come within their radius.

The question before the medical and nursing professions of China to-day, is—was their belief justifiable? There are a great many good people in China, on a far higher plane spiritually than we are (unless this assembly differs vastly from most assemblies of nurses), and these people are largely of the old and tried, who have been in China at least ten or fifteen years—they believe that their motto is "The greatest good to the greatest number"—by which I gather that they mean, we must do the most we can for the greatest possible number of patients, even to the detriment of the quality of our work, and if you try to find out how they dare to do less well than they know, they will reply, "But think how superior our poorest attempts are to anything they have ever had."

Quite true, for before the foreigners brought it, there was no such thing as surgery in China, and their doctors are the veriest of "medicine men," filling their patients with ground glass for indigestion, and thrusting red hot needles into the eyeballs for some trifling eye disease: but what of these people who are willing to give less than their best? The fact is, most of them are daily giving of the best, but they are willing, for the sake of what seems to them expediency, to have us of the medical profession give less than our best. Among people of this way of thinking are a few doctors who have been in China many years.

Is it that they see too many obstacles in the way? They are not the men to stop at obstacles. Have they forgotten the strides their profession makes yearly? Is it that they themselves have fallen behind and grown careless, that they underestimate the value of—well, asepsis for instance? Yet it is due to the superhuman efforts of these very men that we now are able to begin the work as it should be done. Please remember I did not say all the doctors who have been many years in China are of this mind; they are not, I am glad to say. We can only wonder how they keep abreast as they do; we know it means every vacation or furlough spent in Vienna, Berlin, England, or this country—not in *rest* but *work*.

We are not to-day the pioneers of the medical profession in China, though we may be the pioneers of the hospitals conducted on the American plan, and of the training of the student class in the profession or nursing.

But if these veteran workers are right—then

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