

Politics Determine Chinese Health

Hygiene

In China every known disease exists, and floods, wars and famines are common. But the political and economic situation affects the people's health more than any of the diseases, in the opinion of an official of the U. S. Public Health Service, who has recently returned from China. Ignorance and terrific poverty are, of course, responsible for the prevalence of tuberculosis, smallpox, cholera, intestinal diseases and diseases resulting from faulty diet.

Sanitation in the Western sense is completely lacking for all but the wealthy Mandarin class. In fact, vast numbers of the Chinese population have not even a roof to cover them while they sleep, or to protect them from the elements. Their entire property consists of the rags they wear as clothing. The rickshaw coolies, hot and sweating after their last run, have nowhere to sleep at night but the pave-

ment. Such exposure combined with underfeeding makes tuberculosis especially prevalent among them.

The use of human excrement for fertilizer causes great prevalence of diseases like hookworm, dengue, dysentery and typhus, which are due to bacteria and parasites of the intestines. No foreigner dares to eat uncooked food in China. Salads of raw lettuce, celery, tomatoes, etc., are so dangerous as to be prohibitive. In spite of all precautions, foreigners nearly always get dengue fever if they are in the country for any length of time.

A fungus infection of the foot, known as Hong-kong foot, is very common. It is spread by the barefoot coolies, but shod Mandarins and foreigners also acquire it.

The civil wars are, of course, responsible for great loss of life. This is due not so much to the numbers

killed in battle as to the starvation that results when all the able-bodied men of a large district are called from the fields to the armies. Crop failure is the first consequence and famine the second. In a country as thickly populated as China, failure of one crop spells disaster far more complete than in other less densely peopled countries.

The introduction of Western medicine has helped to a small extent. However, until the country is more settled, scientific medicine, hygiene and sanitation cannot hope to reach more than a very small fraction of the people. These because of their terrific poverty cannot really avail themselves of scientific knowledge when it is given them. Even elementary cleanliness is costly and becomes prohibitive when food itself is uncertain and lacking.

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Light on Greek History

Astronomy

Building specifications, contracts, and accounts used by architects who built the famous Greek temples help to interpret happenings in ancient Greece, Prof. Philip H. Davis, of Vassar College, told the Archaeological Institute. Prof. Davis described a careful study of the specifications for the Hall of the Mysteries at the religious center of Eleusis, and showed how, by comparing what the architects planned with what they accomplished, the course of political events in and around Athens can be traced.

This temple was one of great concern to the Greeks because it was the scene of the worship of the earth goddess, Demeter, a widely popular cult. It was burned by the Persians and restored again after these invaders had been driven from Greece. Pericles had the Hall of the Mysteries enlarged and remodeled, and a portico was planned and started. Later, the portico was again an active project, but war with Philip of Macedonia interrupted temple building, and when peace came again the plans were altered to a more magnificent scale to fit with a program of prosperity.

Literal ups and downs of the temple shed light on the times of Athenian prosperity and depression, destructive warfare and constructive peace, progressive expansion and tight economy, Prof. Davis' investigation showed.

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Catnip Lures Tomcats

Zoology

Catnip oil, which the United States Government uses in baiting bobcats and mountain lions on Western ranges, is now being employed by ornithologists to lure tomcats to their doom.

Cats, next to hunters, are the greatest destroyers of bird life, Frederick C. Lincoln, in charge of bird-banding operations conducted by the Bureau of Biological Survey, explained here. One of the principal problems facing managers of stations and sanctuaries is keeping them off the premises.

Mr. Lincoln, aware that Tom had pointed the way to the destruction of mountain lions by parading the family weakness for catnip, experimented with the same bait at the bird-banding station he operates near Washington. He found it a potent weapon where tomcats are concerned, but not so successful with tabbies. Call it feminine intuition, what you will, but, he says, lady cats seem to sense danger and have the will power to resist the fatal odor.

There are in the United States approximately 2,500 bird-banding stations, operated by volunteers under permits issued by the Department of Agriculture, at which more than 450,000 birds, representing 231 different species, have been marked in an effort to learn something of their migrations, and other factors relating to their life history.

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Tides Slow Earth

Astronomy

One and a half billion horsepower, the rate at which the tides of the earth expend their energy, are responsible for a slowing of the earth's rotation somewhat less than a thousandth of a second every century. This was the announcement made by Walter D. Lambert, of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

The usual conception of the tides causing friction, and so slowing down the earth as the friction of a brake-band slows down a moving wheel is not correct, Mr. Lambert pointed out. It is simply a matter of the dissipation of energy, he said. The earth has a certain amount of energy by virtue of its rotation and mass, and this is given up to be dissipated by the tides.

Mr. Lambert criticised some of the current geological notions. "Geologists say that in past geologic eras there were great areas of shallow seas," he said, "and these would be favorable, as such, to large tidal friction and to a more rapid rate of change in the length of the day with perhaps attendant geologic consequences of interest. But shallow seas alone are not enough to produce tidal friction. There must be oceans alongside capable of producing large tides to sweep across the shallow seas and thus generate tidal friction and dissipate energy."

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