

## CHAP. VI.

STATE OF MEDICAL SCIENCE IN CHINA.—DRUGS.—QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MEDICAL MISSIONARY.—ACCOUNT OF THE MEDICAL MISSIONS TO CHINA.—DR. MORRISON.—DR. PARKER.—DR. HOBSON.—HOWQUA, THE HONG MERCHANT, AND THE HOSPITAL AT CANTON.—OTHER HOSPITALS.

IN the following papers on medical missions, it is not intended to give a history of the labours of all who have carried out this Christian design in China; but rather, to offer in brief detail some views of the subject which the writer has derived from his own experience. At the same time, he would accord all honour to those who have preceded him, as well as to those devoted labourers of different sections of the Church of Christ, whom he is rejoiced to have had as colleagues. Animated by one sincere desire, they sought, by the blessing of God, to make their knowledge serviceable in helping forward the great cause of missions to the heathen.

Various travellers have found the possession of medical and surgical knowledge of great value in the prosecution of their undertakings. The relief they have afforded to sick natives, both of high and low degree, has often brought them help in their progress which they would not otherwise have received. The records of our most enterprising adventurers in every clime sufficiently attest this fact.

The same auxiliary has been employed in the missionary enterprise ; and whether we look at the icy regions of Greenland ; the burning plains of Africa ; or the broad valleys and populous cities of India ; at the green and fertile islands of the Pacific, or the commercial ports of the sea-board of China ; in one and all of these regions the missionary has found the way to the hearts of the people most speedily who has been able to give relief from their bodily infirmity. In many of the early missions, the first step towards winning the confidence of the natives, has been the judicious use of this means.

Neither apology nor eulogy will be needed for the science and practice of medicine. The liability of man to disease has called forth his best attention to the relief of those who are suffering. However indefinite and uncertain are many of the plans proposed at various times, yet great is the benefit conferred on afflicted humanity by the healing art.

In Europe, much talent and energy have been spent in ascertaining the true principles of medicine and in improving its practice ; and in consequence, the advance in every department of medical science has been both remarkable and rapid. In heathen lands but little has been done for medicine as a science. The functions of the body being scarcely understood, the application of remedial agents is necessarily very imperfect, and the practitioners of medicine are held in little repute.

This is especially remarkable of China, in which, though a great, populous, and civilised country, with a people largely educated, medicine has not yet been studied to any purpose. There is no recognised system of teaching

medicine; and no diploma or certificate of any kind is required. When any person, as for instance an educated man, intends practising medicine, he will read such books as he thinks most desirable, more especially any manuscript books he can procure, and which contain the results of the experience of any old practitioner. Books of this kind are carefully retained in families; and if a man can say in his card that he is a physician of three, four, or five generations, he is supposed to possess the ability and experience accumulated by his forefathers. Many unsuccessful scholars take to medicine; and thus, for the most part, the physicians are men who have received a good education. The practice of medicine in China is subdivided into various branches: one man will profess to treat general diseases, as fever, rheumatism, &c.; another, the diseases of women; another, the diseases of children; while another confines his attention to affections of the bowels; and so on.

The practitioners of surgery, or those who attend to *external* diseases, are of a lower grade than those who treat *internal* affections, chiefly because surgical manipulations are little understood. None but the most trifling operations are attempted, and, in fact, small attention is paid to this branch of practice, because the relief afforded is so insignificant.

The physicians, thus basing their practice in great degree on experience, treat many of their cases very judiciously. Though their theory of medicine is imperfect, yet they have learned the use and properties of many medicines; they have seen the propriety of various forms of diet; being accurate observers they

can carefully trace out the history of their cases, and finding certain plans of treatment successful, they adapt their action to the disease empirically. Though ever in the dark as to their principles of treatment, they are by this means frequently successful, and many of them obtain a good reputation, and are sent for to see patients at a great distance. When a person is sick his friends consult some physician, who examines the case, states his opinion and his plan of cure, perhaps, on the first or second visit; and the case is left in his hands for a day or two. Should it not follow the course expected, another practitioner is sent for, and sometimes six or seven physicians may successively take charge of the patient. They are called in one after another, until the friends are satisfied with the account given of the case, when perhaps it will be left altogether in the care of one person, who is again changed if recovery does not speedily ensue. The patient and his friends are very whimsical, and uncertain in their adherence to one medical attendant.

Some practitioners confine their remedial skill to the use of acupuncture, which is very dexterously performed. It is largely resorted to for rheumatism, deep-seated pains of all kinds, sprains, swellings of the joints, &c. Others adopt the moxa as their panacea, which they apply very freely to all parts of the body, and often with much benefit.

In their theories the organs of the body are allied to various material substances, as earth, metal, stone, air, water. These have certain distinctive qualities, hot, cold, moist, dry, windy: diseases also have these same qualities, partly in their own nature and partly

attributable to their exciting cause. Medicines again have these various qualities, and are classified accordingly. The object of the practitioner is first to find out the class of the disease, and then out of the appropriate class of remedies he chooses those that he thinks best adapted for the case thus ascertained or supposed. The pulse helps him much in arriving at his conclusions.

To this great attention is paid, and its indications are divided into an almost endless variety, which are for the most part fanciful. It also has its fine peculiarities, and the same routine is practised in applying the condition of the pulse to the diagnosis of the case, and in the adoption of the remedies. Much attention is paid to the relative condition of the pulse on the two sides of the body, and in different regions of the system.

Diet is carefully regarded, and strict rules are laid down for the use or disuse of certain articles, as having a heating or cooling, a dispersing or congesting tendency.

The chief consideration regarding both medicine and diet, in the Chinese practice of physic, is the adaptation of the various properties of drugs and food — as heating or stimulating, cooling or dispersing, moistening or drying — to the character of the disease. These are the things chiefly looked to, but these properties are frequently assumed in a purely arbitrary way.

In advocating medical missions to the heathen, as a desirable auxiliary in spreading the Gospel, I shall not