CHOLERA PREVENTION CAMPAIGN IN FOOCHOW
A LATE WORK OF DR. W. W. PETER

Americans have achieved a splendid work in bringing into China the principles and practices of the Western medical world. Hospitals and schools have been the results with a long train of successful efforts of the medical missionaries. Public health work in the Western world has turned more and more towards the securing of results through health education of the people, and five or six years ago Dr. W. W. Peter began his remarkable popular work among the Chinese in this line. Aided by the National Medical Association, the Chinese Medical Missionary Association and the Y. M. C. A., the earlier educational campaigns were instituted, the story of which has been published in the Journal (October, 1919, pp. 743-749).

FIGURE 1

Firewood (to boil the drinking water) is better than coffin wood.

Since that time, Dr. Peter has visited two other continents before returning to his work with these people. He spent a number of months in the United States in special studies in sanitation and public health, and afterwards aided in the war work in Europe, giving very essential assistance in the management of a great hospital camp of Chinese coolies. The officers had experienced some difficulties in handling these foreigners, who had come to the country to aid the British, but Dr. Peter knew them and their ways and was able to adjust some of the difficulties.

About eighteen months ago, Dr. Peter returned to China, and from his office there has come to the Journal an outline of the Foochow anti-cholera campaign. The story has been somewhat delayed on account of lack of illustrations, but these have recently been supplied through the courtesy of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations. Cholera caused about 200,000 deaths in China in 1919 and it is well worth the attention of the Western world not only from the humanitarian point of view, but as a measure of self-protection. From endemic centers like these the disease spreads to other countries and its cost even to the United States in money necessary to keep watch of it by our quarantine is quite large in amount. Fighting this and other diseases at the source is the modern development of health administration, and thanks to the active agencies noted and the Red Cross, important preventive measures have been set on foot in the Orient.

Cholera is a disease of the seasons, dying down when cold weather sets in. The campaign, therefore, was carried on in the middle of last June, with the intention of repeating the spectacle with its educational value whenever necessary.

The previous work in health education in China has been at definite central points. A hall was secured with its exhibition and its explainers, and admission required a ticket. At this time, however, in fighting a disease in one of its strongholds, Dr. Peter real-
ized the need of what he called "hard street fighting," in which if necessary every street in a town would be visited and practically every threshold. For a large place this program was ambitious, and in Foochow he called in his plans for at least a thousand volunteer workers who should be practically free to participate in the parades.

The administration of this campaign was really very complicated and various branches of service were established to include finance, recruits, police, equipment, advertising, women's auxiliary, investigation, halls, ushers, "movie" show and lantern slide meetings, together with some items like relief for the poor.

In his arrangement with Foochow, which was to finance the movement locally, Dr. Peter impressed on the local committee the fact that if the entire health exhibit from Shanghai were desired it would be necessary to provide transportation accommodations for four tons, which for the boat would mean 13 cubic feet. To the credit of the Chinese city, Foochow requisitioned the complete outfit.

Such a movement does not come to China as a novelty, and in fact the Chinese are quite ready to listen to health lectures. This was evidenced by the fact that especial pains were taken during the Foochow campaign to notify the police and work them into the program. On a previous occasion at Changsa-hunan, the health lecturers neglected to ask for a police detail and the result was that the evening lectures were abandoned on account of the vast crowds, and a number of persons were even injured in the streets because these were crowded by the multitudes wishing to witness the show. In the Foochow campaign the great attention-compelling feature was the parade. First came the governor's military band. This gave recognition to the official, and showed that he was in line with modern progress. Then there were details of civil and military police, and following them were a number of figures such as we see in this country only.

| FIGURE 2 |
| Dish washing, the wrong way. |

| FIGURE 3 |
| The banners are inscribed, "Campaign against flies in Foochow." |

| FIGURE 4 |
| The inscription on the table is, "(Correct) outfit for selling watermelons." |
in Mardi Gras festivals or costume parties, all of them focused on the subject of cholera.

The principal of these figures was that of cholera itself, an expert on stilts, mounted as high as the street signs or wires permitted, with a large movable head and jaw, electric light eyes for night use, and hands that could be controlled by the walker. As he walked along he pointed to the various cholera-predisposing factors in the streets by inclining his head, looking at them, or pointing to them. Following him came half a dozen announcers with megaphones. These were after the pattern of American college student “rooters,” well trained, and in the command of a leader who gave them the cues. “Behold, there is cholera! Last year cholera caused twenty thousand deaths!” Then they point to the crowd at the street edge. “Do you know! Do you know! Then listen?” Hands are raised in unison and they point together to some nuisance. Then they walk for a distance in dramatic silence. “Salvation is at hand,” comes the lusty chorus. “Hear us, O men and women!” Then there is silence; then the grand burst of voices: “But Foochow can be saved! Victory lies within its grasp! But everyone of you must fight for his safety!” One may readily realize the effect of such appeals upon the imaginative dispositions of Orientals.

The procession had in it many floats. These floats, however, are of Chinese pattern, a platform borne by men, little tables, indeed, furnished with bearing poles, on which were displayed the items to be shown and interspersed between them were the megaphone bands emphasizing the points illustrated by the floats. Coffin wood or fire wood (Figure 1), is one of these, a float on which the megaphones of the bearers may be seen. The moral of this which they pointed out is that it is better to use fire wood to boil your water and thus avoid cholera than to be stricken by the water-borne disease and ensconced in the coffin wood.

Then might come the float on the care of dishes and household utensils. (Figure 2) It is a very simple housekeeping outfit. The garbage pail to the right has its cover removed, the water jar next to it, with the curious dipper lying on its top is also uncovered, while there is a rude wooden receptacle and to the left some dishes. Great flies are present, one of them on the edge of the garbage pail and the other inspecting one of the dishes, showing the danger of infection through insects. The flies for this work were made with walnuts for bodies and wings inches in length, but they were pigmies compared with the flies and other insects carried elsewhere in the parade (Figure 3), with banners bearing the legend, “Campaign Against Flies, in Foochow.” The legends and the megaphone men gave point to this feature.

A float (Figure 4) labeled, “Outfit for selling watermelons,” was a lesson in the protection of foodstuffs from contamination, another float not here presented showed the wrong way with great flies crawling over the luscious fruit. Floats of this kind were considerable in number, dish washing,
right and wrong; the table set for the meal, right and wrong; and food selling, right and wrong, with flies in evidence in all the wrong methods, emphasizing the lesson, that flies can convey cholera.

Unpermissible for public exhibition in this country, but meaning much to the Chinese, were the stretchers bearing models of victims dead from cholera. These figures were especially made to exhibit the drawn features of those who die from this disease, and were borne in the procession (Figure 5), together with their crude wooden coffins.

Two of the masked individuals from the parade are shown in Figure 6, Mr. Cholera Victim and Mr. Wiseman, the former emaciated and ill, the latter, well nourished and jolly. Banners

The legend reads, "Inoculation against Cholera, Chinese Y. M. C. A., 1919, under Dr. Peters' Health Campaign Work."
with inscriptions, groups with the floats, and with the insects, were interspersed between bands of music and the vociferating students yelling forth megaphonically their health lessons.

Cholera comes upon the Chinese usually in June. In 1919 it made its appearance and became unusually violent, the people flocked to the temples with incense and paper money. In their extremity they even carried their usually neglected idols through the streets, hoping that these gods would stay the plague. Even intelligent citizens, who normally disbelieved in the idols were caught in the popular hysteria and gave money to the idol bearers. There were others, however, who realized the real facts, so that when the plan was made to have the anti-cholera campaign in Foochow, there was sufficient financial backing.

There were some sharp corners turned in that health campaign according to Dr. Peter in his letters. There was a personal attack on one of the officials by anarchistic individuals, who sought to secure his death by blowing him up, but this failed. Then after the campaign had really opened there were leaders who called a strike among the half hundred students who were such important factors to the parade. There was an intention to use the occasion for the distribution of semi-political propaganda, and when this was denied, there was trouble. The Association leaders were fortunate, however, in having built up strong friendships among the students, and these as a body elected to desert their old leaders and render this service to society.

Despite some unfortunate conditions of weather there were held 285 meetings with no less than 2,380 volunteer workers, with record audiences, and some 300,000 pieces of cholera literature were distributed. Groups of the people assembled as in Figure 7 for inoculation and other measures were put into force. The result is one of which Dr. Peter and his associates may well feel proud. Up to the close of the season of last year, there was no cholera in Foochow.

R.

Mortality Rates of College Women.—A study of the death rate of college women shows that it is less than one-third the estimated death rate of women of the same age group in the registration area. This result was obtained by collecting data on 15,561 college women, representing all the alumnae of Vassar, Smith and Wesslesley and aggregating 204,558 years of life. The general death rate was found to be 3.24 per 1,000 for the period of life included, 20 to 64 years. This was compared with rates of women in the U. S. registration area and found to be lower in every age group. The estimated general rate for women of the registration area is about 10 per 1,000 for the 20 to 64 years group. The figures were also compared with the results of a study of New York City school teachers in 1916 and found to be very much in accordance with them. These teachers had been found to have the lowest rates of any New York City employees.

These results are most significant in that they show what can be accomplished in reducing the death rate among those who have certain advantages of living. If the same favorable conditions that college women enjoy could be applied to other classes, the mortality rates would undoubtedly be lower.—M. M. Hulat Quarterly Pub. Am. Statistical Assn., March, 1921.—(J. A. T.)

Comparison of the Wassermann and Sachs-Georgi Reactions in the Serologic Diagnosis of Syphilis.—A diagnosis of syphilis, or a conclusion as to treatment, cannot be based on the results of a Sachs-Georgi test with safety, and the reaction is not suitable for general use for this purpose.—Robert A. Kilduffe, Arc. Derm. Syph., 3, 415 (1921).