

An appeal to the religious and benevolent public on behalf of a proposal to establish a medical school for the natives of China, in connection with the Chinese medical mission at Hong-Kong / [Benjamin Hobson].

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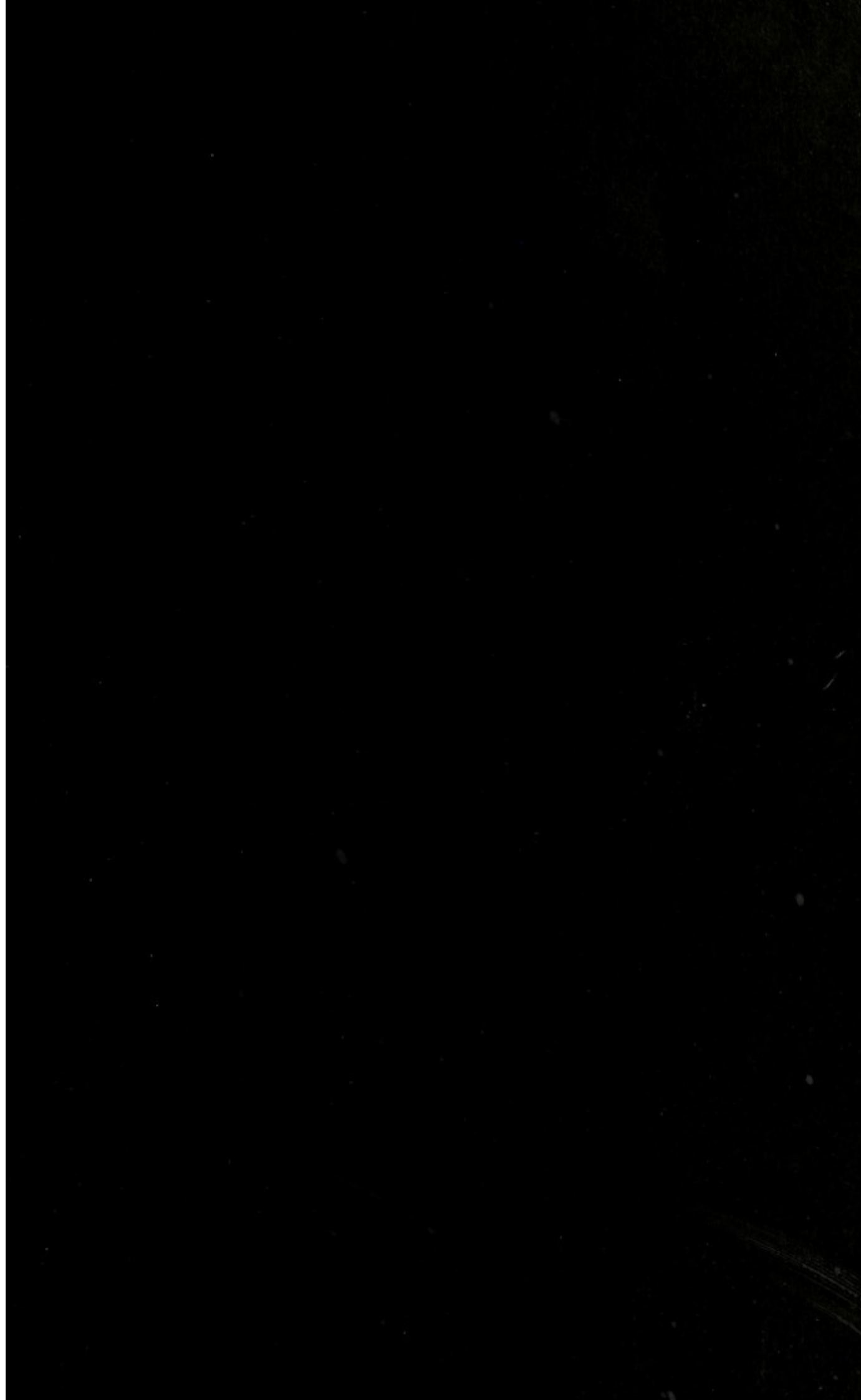
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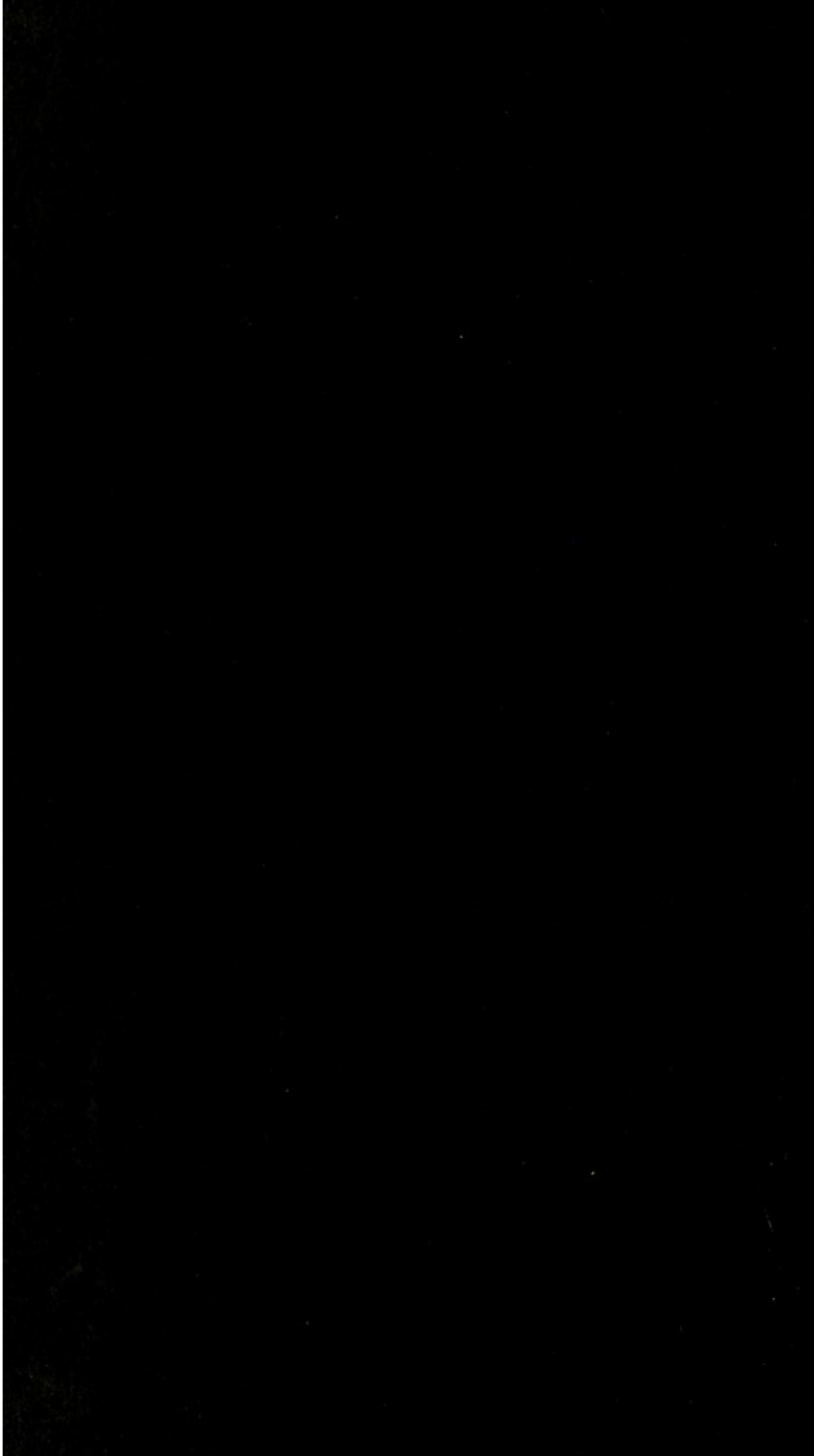
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AN APPEAL

TO THE

RELIGIOUS AND BENEVOLENT PUBLIC

ON BEHALF OF A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A

MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR THE NATIVES OF CHINA,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHINESE

MEDICAL MISSION AT HONG-KONG.

THE writer of this appeal has had occasion to return to his native land for a brief period from China, where he has been employed as a medical missionary, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society ; and he now hopes to be able to forward the great object, towards which the sympathies of many Christians are now directed, of disseminating the blessings of the Gospel amongst the people of that country, by the publication of statements to which he earnestly invites the attention of the religious and benevolent public.

China is venerable for its high antiquity ; and surpasses, in its population and inhabited territory, every other nation of the earth. It presents features in its history, government, language, and moral condition peculiarly striking, commanding on the one hand our admiration and respect, and on the other, exciting our deepest commiseration and regret. The Ruler of the universe has placed our country, though so distant, in a remarkable connection, and no less responsible relation with these teeming millions of the eastern world. Our commerce with the Chinese commenced more than two centuries ago, and is now greater than at any preceding time, and is increasingly important to the manufacturing interests and revenue of Great Britain.

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The intelligence, general education, ingenuity, and civilization of the Chinese are proverbial ; but facts and observation teach us, that they are infatuated idolaters, and require the knowledge and blessings of Christianity to raise them to that state of intellectual and moral improvement which they are capable of attaining. From their abject deference to the wisdom of their sages, their slavish adherence to ancient customs, added to an innate contempt and dislike of all innovation and influence from other nations, they have made no advance for ages, but rather retrograded. Hence, true science and religion have scarcely shed one genial ray to dissipate that dark superstition and ignorance, in which their philosophy and moral condition are alike involved ; and the free exercise of thought and intellect being checked and paralysed, by a principle of action so opposed to their development, there appears to be but little prospect of any change for the better, unless external influence and example can be made instrumental in dissolving this charm of antiquity, and inducing a spirit of independent thought and conduct, worthy of a nation so great in many other respects. Under this impression, what benevolent or Christian mind can contemplate the work of evangelizing so large and populous a portion of the Eastern hemisphere, without a deep sense of its own responsibility to help forward this happy consummation ?

To obviate in a good measure the exclusiveness of this peculiar people, a modification in conducting Christian missions to China has of late years been adopted, by the employment of pious medical agency. The object of this paper is not to describe, commend, or plead for Medical Missions, except by stating that not far short of 100,000 Chinese have received medical aid from English and American physicians. At present, there are four hospitals and three dispensaries in active operation, and conducted at a small expense, on the coast of China ; and to which, from 30,000 to 40,000 sick persons resort in the course of a single year. All these pass under medical inspection, evince great confidence in, and thankfulness for, the benefits received ; and from the religious and moral instruction imparted, return to their homes with many prejudices removed, and with impressions favourable to Christianity produced. From which it will be apparent that jealous as they are of all innovation, they cannot exclude disease, and from the low state of the medical art in China, particularly of surgery, they gladly avail themselves of the superior skill of foreigners ; hence a power is at once put into our hands which it becomes us to employ to the best advantage.

The operations of foreign missionaries, necessary and useful as they are in many ways, are liable at any time to be suspended by disease or death. It is therefore an object of great importance, if any permanent advance is to be

effected, to educate and qualify *the natives themselves* for the office of evangelists and teachers.

And if a similar agency can be brought into operation to introduce the practice of a more enlightened system of medicine, and to diffuse it to others, it requires no prophetic eye to predict that it would be one of the most effectual means of overturning the present erroneous systems, and substituting in their place the more modern and correct views and practice of the European schools; this united to the diffusion of Christian truth, would prove incompatible with the continuance of paganism, superstition, and error, and increase a hundred-fold the happiness of the people of China.

The plan now proposed is to commence a permanent establishment of this kind at the British Colony, to be called, "The Hong-Kong School of Medicine for the natives of China."

To show the necessity of such an institution, it may be here mentioned in a few words, that there is no university, college, or examining board, to educate or exercise any control over native practitioners, so that their knowledge is confined to books that were written 2000 years ago, utterly false and absurd in theory, and ineffective in practice. The true circulation of the blood is unknown, and all anatomical research discountenanced and forbidden. Surgical operations, except of the most trivial kind, are never attempted, and even diseases of the eye, affecting as they do so large a portion of the native population, are equally misunderstood and mismanaged.

The importance of the above object will be best shown by mentioning some of the advantages that would result from its accomplishment. Such are—the more effectual and extended relief of the maladies incident to so large a population,—the gradual introduction and extension of a better system of medicine, and other useful branches of knowledge,—and the liberalizing influence of these upon the Chinese mind. Medicine is intimately connected with many of the natural sciences, which strikingly display the wisdom and beneficence of the great Creator, and to which the attention of the students would be carefully directed. These studies, together with moral and religious training, will, with the Divine blessing, prove a powerful instrument of good, by forming a class of men of superior talents and acquirements, well suited to move and remodel the torpid, stereotyped mind of China.

It may be little by little, and step by step, that such a change upon the ancient customs of the country will be accomplished; but this kind of agency does appear to many to be that which is most likely to attain the proposed end. To show that the scheme is not a visionary one, it is proper to state that it has been tried on a small scale, and found successful. A *native assistant* is now conducting (with only occasional supervision in im-

portant cases, by Dr. Dill, colonial surgeon,) a large native hospital during the absence of his medical instructor in England, and in a manner satisfactory and pleasing.

In order likewise to furnish an unbiassed opinion in favour of the same object, two extracts are here inserted; the first from a local paper, being a part of a communication from A. Anderson, Esq., late colonial surgeon; and the second from an admirable work on China, by Dr. Wilson, Inspector of Naval Hospitals, etc.

"A Chinese youth, Apoon, who has been for some time studying medicine and surgery under the tuition of Dr. Hobson, was examined on the knowledge he has attained in that interesting and useful science. The examination consisted of a minute description of the anatomy and physiology of the eye, of the various structures composing that delicate and beautiful organ, and of their uses; of the diseases of the eye and eyelids, and of the treatment of the numerous forms these diseases assume, and the method of cure adapted to each, with an inquiry into the general treatment without which the remedies applied to the organ itself so often prove unavailing. After describing those diseases more prevalent among his own countrymen, Apoon performed two operations of couching for cataract, one on the right and the other on the left eye of the same patient; and two for the cure of Entropium, in a manner steady and skilful, and affording good promise of future excellence as an operator.

"The minute knowledge he displayed on these subjects, called forth the warm commendations of the medical gentlemen present."—"This is carrying out fully the object of medical missions. It will rapidly extend the usefulness of these institutions, and tend to spread among their countrymen a desire to search after the truths of general science, and we trust of that religion, whose advancement forms the chief object of this society."

"Some time ago the writer saw a young man, named Apoon, educated by Dr. Hobson, perform, adroitly, various operations on the eye, including that for cataract, in the Hong-Kong hospital. He was well acquainted with the structure of the eye, its diseases, and their most approved methods of treatment. During his residence in the hospital he had acquired a competent knowledge of the English language, had the stores of information from the western world opened to him, and ample opportunities of learning the doctrines and precepts of Christianity.

"He will soon return to his native place, near Canton, to dispense the fruits of what he gained at Hong-Kong. Others will follow, to penetrate further and further into the country, till the whole empire, it is hoped, shall be pervaded by those real reformers and benefactors of their fellows;

and they will have great advantage over alien instructors. Speaking the language fluently, and appearing without the suspicion of bringing disguised evil under the cloak of professed benevolence, they will appeal effectually to the intellects, affections, and consciences of their countrymen."

Having, as it is hoped, proved that such an institution as is now proposed, is both highly desirable and practicable, difficult and arduous as the work will be, it only remains to describe briefly the plan of operation, and what is required to carry it into effect.

The pupils proposed to be entered into this institution, will be from ten to fifteen in number, or more, if circumstances will admit; preference being given to those of good character and ability. They will be admitted from any private or public school at Hong-Kong, or the five ports. A small allowance to such as require support will be given monthly, to provide rice and clothes.

The elements of Physics and Natural Theology, and the different branches of Medicine, with hospital practice, will be taught in a systematic course of instruction during a period of three years. Public examinations will take place annually; and at the last examination a certificate of general proficiency will be given to those whose attainments are found to be satisfactory. The greater part, on the termination of their studies, would readily obtain a sufficient competency to maintain themselves by their practice; others would be for a time employed as dressers and assistants in the Military and Seamen's Hospitals. And some, it is hoped, imbued with the spirit and knowledge of Christianity, would be qualified for the honourable and important work of native missionaries to their countrymen.

During the whole period of instruction, strict regard will be paid to moral discipline. No sectarian views will be inculcated; and as the influence of caste does not exist, there can be no fear of doing violence to the prejudices of the people by the introduction of Christian ethics. The students would therefore be expected to attend morning and evening prayer, either in the hospital with the patients, or in the family of the resident medical missionary; and to the study of the inspired volume.

Such is an outline of the character and objects of the proposed institution; and what is now wanted to carry the project into effect is, the appointment of a qualified instructor, and the erection of suitable premises, and apparatus.

With regard to the first, the London Missionary Society,—which is the only one that as yet has sent out medical missionaries to China,—has resolved to appoint another medical missionary to this field, and to support him out of their funds for this particular duty, provided the expense of the buildings is defrayed from other sources.

There appears no reason to doubt that an individual will be found of religious principles, and the necessary professional qualifications, to engage in this noble object of Christian enterprise.

What therefore is most needed, are subscriptions and donations to form a building fund to provide the necessary accommodation for the resident teacher and students, and for a library, museum, and lecture-rooms, which, according to the best calculation, including the expense of apparatus, with the utmost economy, will not be less than £1000.

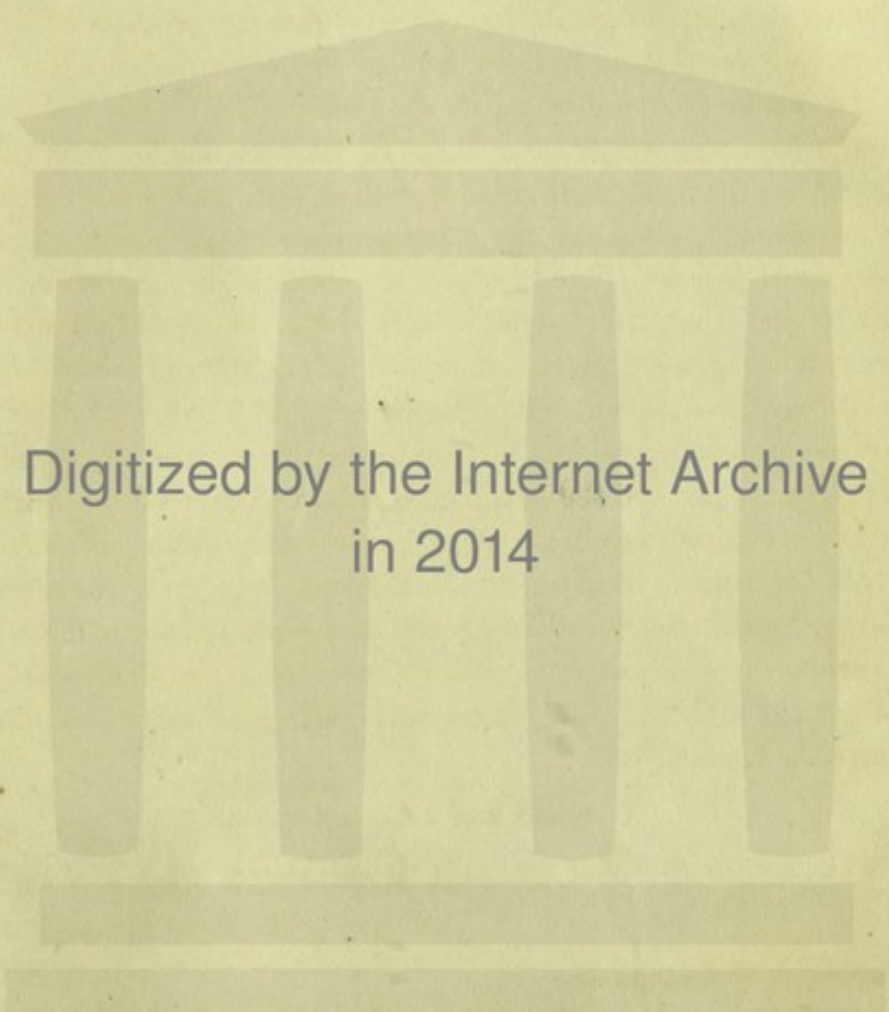
Hong-Kong is the only place on the coast of China where the operations of such an institution could be carried on with any prospect of success, and there only would there be freedom from official surveillance, and interruption in the study of anatomy. A site very eligible for the purpose, immediately adjoining the Chinese hospital, has been kindly promised by His Excellency Sir John Davis, free of ground-rent; and several medical men connected with the royal navy, army, and civil service residing in the colony, and members of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, have shown their interest in the object, by pledging themselves to use all the influence in their power in aiding its establishment. Subscriptions and donations are respectfully, but earnestly requested from the benevolent and Christian public, to raise the sum above-mentioned. And to prevent the alienation of the property from its original object and the public good, a deed of trust will be legally drawn out; a local committee will also afford good security for the judicious expenditure of the money subscribed for this purpose. With these observations, and the hope that the proposal will meet with encouragement, and with the requisite pecuniary support, both from his brethren of the medical profession, and the affluent and charitable, into whose hands this appeal may come, the writer subscribes himself their

Obedient and humble Servant,

BENJAMIN HOBSON, M.B.,
Member of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Welford, Northamptonshire,

April 28, 1846.



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