

Notes and Comments

— On the Passing of Sir Patrick Manson

The Editorial Board

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Sir Patrick Manson

News is just to hand, as we go to press, of the death of Sir Patrick Manson, G.C.M.G., F.R.S. Of his great scientific attainment, his epoch-making discoveries in Tropical Medicine, his long and brilliant career, it is unnecessary for us to speak here. To us he was more than a mere scientist, a giant in the world of disease. He was bound to us by ties closer and more intimate than many of us could imagine. As an honorary graduate of this University we felt that he was one of ourselves, but it is as a founder of the old Hongkong College of Medicine (which formed the nucleus of this University) that we wish most to associate his name. With Sir James Cantlie and the late Dr. Jordan, he was mainly responsible for the efficient working of the College in its early and most critical years. Perhaps it would not be out of place here to give some extracts from his Inaugural Address delivered as Dean of the College in October, 1887:

“I can conceive no grander position or opportunity for any man to have than that we offer to each of our students. At his hack the whole of European science, before him 300,000,000 to whom to give it. Such a position must fire the ambition of some of them. It is most strange that no great man, or great men, have arisen for this work. He, and they, will come. The old Greek cities

used to boast of their great men and claim them with jealous care. Let us hope that in the new and greater China of the future, when the learned dispute of their great men, not a few may be claimed for Hongkong and for the School to-day inaugurated.....

And when these reforms are effected and changes made, what to us Europeans will be the consequences? Politically over three hundred millions of the most industrious, thrifty, persevering, homogeneous, physically-adaptable, clever people, at present hardly a cipher in political calculations, will be no insignificant factor in the combinations of the future. Their numbers, no longer kept under by preventable disease, civil wars, infanticide, or polygamy, will rapidly increase and they will expand in all directions. Perhaps the deadly upas tree of opium will by that time have been uprooted. Minor peoples, Annamites, Siamese, Malays, will go down before them or be absorbed by them. A great homogeneous Chinese-speaking nation will spread from Siberia to Australia. It requires little of the prophetic to foresee this. The process has already commenced. In those days wise men will again come from the East. The people who gave us the invention of printing will give yet other peaceful and useful arts; the first to use gunpowder will not be backward in the art of war; the discoverers of inoculation will add again to the prevention and cure of disease. Those hundreds of millions will double the recruiting ground of science and may yet give back to Europe more than they got. It seems to me sometimes that we are teaching the Chinese to beat ourselves.”