

Foreign Medical Women in Korea

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THE METHODIST CHURCH of the United States started missionary work in Korea during the latter part of the last century, and soon thereafter it was realized that it was essential to provide a hospital exclusively for the care of women and children. Consequently, in 1886, Dr. William B. Scranton, of the Methodist Mission in Korea, asked the Women's Foreign Missionary Society to send out a woman physician. Dr. Meta Howard, a graduate of Northwestern University Medical School, responded to the call and reached Korea in 1887. Under her direction the first women's hospital in Korea was inaugurated on the Ehwa Girls' School Compound, where later the kindergarten was erected. Queen Min of Korea gave the hospital its name, Po Ku Nyo Kwan, or "Caring for and Saving Women's Hospital." After two years of arduous service, during which she treated several thousand women and children and also looked after the students in the Ehwa School, Dr. Howard's health failed, and in 1889 she returned to the United States.

In 1888, Dr. Lillias Horton, also a graduate of Northwestern University Medical School, was sent out to Korea by the Presbyterian Board and assumed responsibility for the women's department in the Government Hospital, where formerly Miss Ellers, who had had some training both as a nurse and as a physician, had assisted Dr. Horace N. Allen. Dr. Horton became the trusted physician to Queen Min. In 1889, she married the Reverend H. G. Underwood, also of the Presbyterian Mission. Later Dr. Horton-Underwood opened a small hospital and dispensary, which became known as "The Shelter." Still later this was used for Dr. Oh's "Boys' Orphanage."

In 1890, Dr. Rosetta Sherwood, a graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, was sent to Korea by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, to continue work in the first women's hospital. She also opened the Baldwin Dispensary, Great East Gate, Seoul, shortly before her marriage in 1892 to the Reverend William James Hall.

The next medical women to arrive in Korea were Dr. Fanny Hurd Brown, a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, and Dr. L. R. Cook, from England, in 1891. The former, with her husband, also a physician, began their

work in Fusan in 1892. Dr. Cook was placed in charge of a small dispensary and hospital at Nak-tong, Seoul, where the Sisters of the English Church lived later. Dr. Cook's work received the high approbation of Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, who visited Korea in 1893 after her visit to Thibet. Dr. Katherine Allen, also sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, joined Dr. Cook and later married Dr. Baldock; with her husband, she took over the work of the hospital when Dr. Cook left for India. After a few years, however, both were transferred to China, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel discontinued medical work in Seoul. Dr. Nancy Borrow was another who did pioneer work at Chemalpo, Paikchun, then located at Yojn, remaining there until the evacuation of missionaries in World War II.

Dr. Mary M. Cutler, a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, arrived in Korea in 1893, and made it possible for Dr. Rosetta Sherwood Hall to join her husband in the city of Pyong Yang, where she opened the first women's hospital in the interior, on May 15, 1894. In 1895, Dr. Georgiana Whiting was sent to Korea by the Presbyterian Board. After a few years of medical work she married Dr. Owen of the Presbyterian Mission, South, and they began work at Mokpo, later moving to Kwangju.

The year 1897 brought great reinforcements to the medical women in Korea. Dr. Alice Fish, Dr. Mattie Ingold, Dr. Eva H. Fields, and Dr. Ross were sent out by the Presbyterian Board; and Dr. Lillian Harris, from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, was sent by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, which also returned Dr. Hall. During the winter of 1897-98, there were eight women physicians in Seoul, and there is no doubt that at this time a serious mistake was made. They knew that the needs of the Korean women and children could never be met by a few foreign doctors, and before becoming "separated upon the wall, one far from the other," they should have seized this opportunity to join thus early in training Korean women in medicine.

Dr. Hall resumed her work in Pyong Yang, where Dr. Fish also was stationed and had opened a women's dispensary outside the West Gate. Dr. Ross went to work in Fusan. Dr. Ingold had charge

Until some one remarked why, as many women doctors for Korea? I had never thought to explain that "exclusion of women" has been so strict there since Jap. inv.

of a hospital in Chunju for some years. Dr. Harris enlarged the work at Baldwin Dispensary, Great East Gate, Seoul. Dr. Field assumed charge of the Women's Department in what had been the Government Hospital which had been removed from the old Foreign Office to Ku-Ri-Gay, where Dr. C. C. Vinton had been enabled to institute changes freeing it from the uncertainties of government control and running it more as a Mission Hospital. Here Dr. Field worked acceptably for five years with Dr. Avison and during his first furlough had full charge in association with Dr. A. M. Sharrocks, who had recently arrived. After her marriage, Dr. Field-Pieters continued to do medical work in Chairyung and later at Severance Hospital, Seoul, where she died in 1932.

Dr. Kate McMillan of New Brunswick, who was sent out by the Canadian Presbyterian Mission, was the pioneer medical worker in Ham Heung on the northeast coast of Korea, from 1902 until her death in 1922, following which Dr. Florence J. Murray assumed the charge.

After the death of Dr. Lillian Harris in 1902, Dr. Emma Ernsberger took up her work at the Baldwin Dispensary and gave great service to the women and children; she was largely responsible for building the Lillian Harris Memorial Hospital at the Great East Gate. Dr. Ernsberger was sent out in 1899 by the Cincinnati Branch of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, the same branch which had sent Dr. Harris to the field and later largely furnished the funds for the fine Memorial Hospital, completed by Dr. Mary Stewart in 1911. The Po Nyo Kwan, the first women's hospital in Korea, was then combined with the Lillian Harris Memorial, and the first nurses' training school, established in 1902 by Dr. Cutler and Miss Margaret Edmonds, R.N., at the Po Nyo Kwan, was also removed to the Memorial. More babies have been delivered at the Lillian Harris Memorial Hospital than in all the other hospitals in Korea put together!

Dr. Null did some pioneer work in Taigu and Chungju from 1903 to 1909, but soon after returned to the United States.

Dr. Cutler joined Dr. Hall in Pyong Yang, at the Kwang Hae Nyo Won, the "Women's Hospital of Extended Grace," which was so named by the Governor of the Province, whose wife had been Dr. Hall's patient soon after her return in 1897. Here was developed the greatest gynecological practice in Korea. The hospital also became well known for orthopedic surgery.

Dr. E. J. Davies, niece of Mr. and Mrs. Davies who founded the Australian Mission in Korea, arrived in 1918, and joined the staff of the hospital

in Chinju, South Korea. Dr. Byram of the Presbyterian Mission began medical work in Kangkei, away in the north of Korea, in 1921.

In 1926, Dr. Marian B. Hall, another graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, and in 1927, Dr. Bernita Block, a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, arrived in Korea, and located in the Norton Memorial Hospital in Haiju on the west coast, and at the Lillian Harris Memorial Hospital, respectively. In 1928, Dr. Evelyn Leadbeater, a graduate of the Syracuse University College of Medicine, was sent by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society to Pyong Yang, and when she left Dr. Block replaced her.

All were withdrawn from Korea by the United States during World War II, and, though a number of missionaries have returned, Dr. Florence J. Murray of Newfoundland up until 1949 was the only foreign medical woman there. Since there are at present 476 Korean medical women, and since their number is added to yearly, the need for foreign doctors now is not so great.

Some items from Dr. Murray's most recent annual report are of interest. The Lillian Harris Memorial Hospital suffered a disastrous fire, during which no one was injured but much damage was done to the building and equipment; and the hospital was closed for six months while repairs were being made. On their completion, Dr. Murray was put in charge. Feeling that the students of the Medical Department of Euha University deserved a better course of instruction than it was possible to give and that it was unfair to penalize them for what was not their fault, Dr. Murray asked to be relieved of the office of Dean. Early in the year an invitation to join the staff of Severance Union Hospital was accepted, and she was put in charge of the pediatrics department and soon after was given supervision of the private patients' pavilion and the foreign patients' clinic. She was also made assistant superintendent. Working conditions in all institutions were reported as improved throughout the year, and supplies, though still insufficient, were more nearly adequate. The Korean Medical Association was formed, and the Tuberculosis Seal Campaign, begun by Dr. Sherwood Hall, son of Dr. Rosetta Hall, in 1932, was revived.

As all the world now knows, Dr. Murray and all other foreign missionaries were suddenly evacuated from Korea on June 26, with short notice, and are now in Japan. Between the armies of the North and South and the foreign forces it looks as if this "Land of Morning Calm" would be utterly demolished.