

GARLIC AS A GERM DESTROYER

The Chinese Resistance to Disease and a Modern Chemist's Invention

From a Correspondent.

Harbin, Mar. 28.

Last year a Chinese doctor, educated in Europe, told your correspondent that he believed the ability of his people to resist disease was attributable to some extent to the use of garlic as food. It is ever a source of bewilderment to the visiting layman and doctor why the Chinese who live as the coolies do, in surroundings that, to say the least, are the opposite of sanitary, do not succumb in phalanxes to diseases that are communicated by germs. Cholera is not common in China, but the conditions would seem to invite it. Cleanliness of food, fly exclusion, or the precautions that are urged on people of other countries threatened with cholera are not practised by the Chinese.

Tuberculosis is not rampant among the Chinese, and their immunity to bad effects from the social diseases is well known. This does not mean that they are exempt from these pestilential visitations, but they do not suffer from them in anything like the depth of misery that other nationals do. The use of disinfectants is an unknown art among the commoners of China. Fresh air as a concomitant of health is an unheard of doctrine among the many millions who live crowded together in the warrens of the cities of the republic. Bathing, that urgent necessity of Britons and Americans, is not common. Every canon of medicine, especially those which stress septic principles, is violated, and yet the death rate among the Chinese is not high.

THE CLAIMS OF SCIENCE.

Now comes a chemist from London who makes the claim that his extract of garlic destroys germs. Carbolic acid and such other powerful agents have heretofore been looked on as the only germicides that were a sure shot against the members of the bacillus family, but the trouble with everything of the kind is that they kill people if they come in contact. If this claim for the extract of garlic is proven true, it is a revolution in antiseptic accomplishment. And another glory that can be superimposed on the new germ destroyer is that its odour has been neutralized. In the booklet setting forth the claims of the new hygienic compound, it is stated that if raw garlic is bound on the soles of the feet, its odour can be tasted by the wearer in a few hours.

Visitors to China have written exhaustively of the redolence of the atmosphere where there were many of the workmen collected, and while those who reside in the

country grow more or less accustomed to the aroma of garlic, they are ever aware of its presence. It will require no argument to cause the foreigners in China to subscribe to a belief in the permeating ability set forth in the statement about being able to taste garlic put in the shoes, and if its fatality to the microbe is substantiated, they will as readily embrace faith in the doctrine that it is the substance which frees the Chinese from germ diseases.

THE CALMER TEMPERAMENT.

Tests made by doctors show that the Chinese have an average blood pressure which is less than that of Americans and Europeans by from 20 to 30 millimeters. In commenting on this finding, a well known journal says that many a high-strung, nervous American, with the top of his head ready to fly off into space, would probably be glad to subsist on Chinese food and spend his time in meditation on the doctrines of Confucius, if by such means he could obtain relief. High blood pressure and consequent hardening of the arteries is the bane of existence of the white races, and it may be that the lifelong consumption of garlic in not mean quantities accounts for the absence of that handicap against longevity among the Chinese.

Absence of nervous strain is suspected as a contributory cause for the low blood pressure of the Chinese in comparison with the Caucasian peoples, but the strenuous and vociferous quarrels that are common among the former would increase the deaths from apoplexy manifold if engaged in by the latter. Simplicity of life is another reason suggested. This can hardly be accepted, as the average Chinese only leads a simple life from force, brought about by economic conditions. The use of opium is excluded: likewise physical inferiority, as the tests were made on active and healthy students. Accept the discovery that garlic has yielded a germicide that does the required work. Consent to the fact that the Chinese are the world's greatest consumers of garlic as food. Put the two together, and there is a germ free nation. Without having to combat the various cocci to which civilized mankind is heir, the heart is relieved of much of its burden. Is the conclusion tenable?