

The Problem in China

Written For
The Bee

By Hon. Edwin H. Conger,
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THE Chinese question will be settled in a satisfactory manner and within reasonable time. The representatives of the powers that were compelled to send troops to Peking to rescue the members of the foreign legations and their families and friends are making progress in the negotiations looking to a final settlement of the relations between the Chinese empire and the nations of the world. When they have agreed as to the amount of the indemnity and the manner in which it is to be raised, the Chinese government will accede to their demands and there will be restoration in large part of the status which existed before the boxer riots.

The Chinese government realizes fully that reparation must be made for the wrongs done. The government is doing all in its power to effect a settlement. The leading viceroys and prominent men of China now understand that a great mistake was made in countenancing the boxer movement. They have shown repentance and a disposition to yield to the representatives of the powers. No such outbreak will be permitted again as long as the present leaders are in power. They have been taught a terrible lesson. The settlement will be effected along the line of President McKinley's circular to the powers and with due regard for American interests and the interests of all foreigners. It will be made so that there will never again be an attempt on the part of the Chinese government to shut the door in the face of foreigners. And that settlement will be satisfactory to the world.

When order has been restored, the terms



Mayor Victor Jennings. Hon. John N. Baldwin. Minister Conger. Governor Shaw. Senator Dooliver. Hon. A. B. Cummins. Hon. C. M. Harl.
GROUP AT THE CONGER BANQUET—Flashlight photo for The Bee by Bostwick.

of peace made known and the government is fully restored to power again our mission work will go on, the educational movement will be taken up again, railroad building will be resumed, trade and commerce will be restored and in general the relations of China to the world will be much the same as before. The progressive men of the Chinese nation will be in control of the affairs of government and they will make China a better country than it ever was before.

All this is true despite the fact that the

Chinese government was fully responsible for the boxer outrages and the movement to expel all foreigners from China and destroy everything that was foreign. The Chinese government was drawn into that movement by the powerful princes and viceroys and gave encouragement to a movement which had taken deep hold on the highly superstitious Chinese people. The governor of Shan Tung province furnished money and support for the secret society we know as boxers, armed the men and seized upon the movement to further his reactionary designs. The movement spread over into Chi Li, the province in which Peking is situated, and was taken up in the end by the Chinese government under direction of the emperor. The horde of boxers who at first besieged Peking was supplanted by the army of the empire and it was Chinese soldiers, drilled and armed by the government, as well as boxer mobs, that resisted the march of the allies to the relief of the legations. What was at first a revolutionary movement was in the end taken up by the government and adopted by it. But the government now realizes what an awful mistake was made and how costly it will be for them.

Work of a Buddhist Fakir.

The secret society which we call the boxers is one of the ancient secret societies of the empire. China has a great many secret societies and some of them have been in existence for centuries. But the boxers had not been of any importance for perhaps a century and had not been heard of. Two years ago a Buddhist priest of the province of Shan Tung took up the boxer society and revived or reorganized it as a religious movement. He claimed supernatural powers—could call down from above an army of millions of Chinese warriors fully armed and equipped for battle; could by manipulating the body make it impervious to the bullets of the enemy and with these powers he professed to be able to drive all the foreigners out of China. The society grew with great rapidity and the ignorant Chinese were drawn into the society by thousands. But

at the outset it was not directed against foreigners. Not until the governor of the province took it up and commenced to arm boxers did the society become a medium for expelling foreigners. The assistance of a powerful princess was obtained and the society spread to other provinces. Up to the time of the killing of Rev. Dr. Brooks, a missionary, there had not been a foreigner harmed, and his death was more an accident than design. But the powerful men who directed the course of the boxer society were determined on making war on everything foreign, not on the missionaries alone, but on all enterprises, railroads, business, schools and everything that had been introduced into China. They encouraged the boxers in the fanatical belief that they would be able to expel all foreigners. They believed they were invincible. They were aroused with a religious frenzy and then led on by what they believed was necessary for China.

First of the Martyrs.

The first outrages came in the early summer of last year, when a native village of Christians was attacked and destroyed and many Christians killed. The missionaries and their converts made brave resistance and many acts of heroism were performed by the God-fearing men sent to China to evangelize the nation living in darkness. The missionaries did not cause the boxer movement. It was not directed toward them, but toward all foreigners and every foreign innovation by which the Chinese empire was being modernized. In a few weeks many missionaries perished. They were heroes all. When the history is known of all that they endured and all that they did in China their names will be high in the list of martyrs.

The foreign ministers and their families, with many missionaries and other foreigners and many native Christians, were cut off from the rest of the world early in June of last year, at first by the boxers, who formed a great mob outside of the part of the city set apart for the legations, and the siege lasted until August 15. There were

over 400 residents of the legation during the siege who were foreigners and about as many more native Christians.

Life During the Siege.

The story of what happened during that terrible siege has been fully told in the American newspapers. Nothing can be added to it. No person who has not experienced such a siege can have any conception of what it is like. For weeks we lived together as one great family, men, women and children of many nationalities, huddled together in houses where we had insufficient room and few of the comforts of life, with food portioned out to us to save it as long as possible, living a part of the time on horse and mule meat, with many sick and wounded and no way to care for them, with constant firing from the horde of Chinese just outside the legation walls, with women and girls busy helping with the making of barricades, constant danger wherever we were from the bullets of the Chinese, the terrible attacks upon our lines, repeated night after night, with the noise of the firing and the added noise of Chinese fire-crackers and the blowing of horns, not knowing what minute we would be set upon and all be slaughtered, not knowing what our friends were doing for our succor, unable to communicate with the outside world—it was all like a terrible nightmare to us and no words can describe our infinite joy at deliverance when the soldiers of the relief column broke through the wall of savagery which surrounded us and once more opened the civilized world to us.

Women Were an Inspiration.

The bravery of the women in the legation during that time was our greatest inspiration and the way the valiant marines resisted every attack and when necessary broke down the barricades the Chinese built in our front was one of the things which buoyed us up in our days of trial. Now that it is all over, the best that can happen is speedy settlement of the matter with the Chinese government to the end that the damage done may be speedily repaired.

EDWIN H. CONGER.



GOVERNOR SHAW GREETES MINISTER CONGER.

Chinese Domestic Life and Customs

By Mrs. E. H. Conger
Of the Besieged Legation

THERE is a vast difference between the people of the northern provinces of China and those of the south. This difference is in the habits of the people, in their language, in their social and domestic customs and in everything. For instance, in the southern countries around Canton and elsewhere one sees many women at work or in shops or out on the street, but go into Peking and you might suppose it was a city of men alone, for you see no women. In the northern provinces the women are kept from view. If they go out it is in a carriage with the curtains drawn. They may ride in a chair, but you cannot see them. They remain in their houses much more than in the south.

There are many female servants, or amah, as we call them, but they are mostly married women, the wives of other servants. We had an amah who was the wife of our gatekeeper. They are careful and painstaking people. Their wages are low, but their income is ample. This is due to the system of "squeeze," which is firmly established and is a custom which has been reduced to a system and endured for centuries. By this system the compensation of the servants and employes is increased until they live well. Whenever you send a servant out to make a purchase you know that the servant will get his "squeeze," or percentage. There is no way of detecting him at it, and you might as well make up your mind to let it go on rather than to try to disturb an old-established Chinese custom. The system extends all the way through from high to low. The servant of the minister exacts his "squeeze" and gets a little more than the servant of the first secretary of legation, and the first secretary's servant gets more than the servant of the second secretary, and so on. That is the custom with Chinese officials and with foreigners. The "squeeze" is taken in every transaction and it all comes out of the for-

aigner. For instance, we had a gatekeeper at the American legation we wished to discharge. We were told that if we did so the new employe would exact his "squeeze" and also that of the discharged gatekeeper. We would have to pay both. Thus it is that the income of employes is increased substantially. And the system is so well established and so universally recognized that

it is useless to try to prevent it.

Difficulties of Dialects.

But the customs differ in different provinces. The language of the coolies is different in each province. They are densely ignorant. They never mingle with each other. They have no means of exchanging views. Hence their language degenerates into dialects and these are dif-

ferent. Our servant we took along with us when we started home went with us to Canton and Hong Kong, but he could not understand the language of the men about him. The mandarins understand each other, but among the common people, the coolies, there are many languages or dialects.

It is this stability of customs that makes China what it is. I am not sure but that it

is the best for them. Their system of "squeeze," or taking a percentage on every transaction, is all right. It is only one of their ways and not a bad one at all.

The Chinese people, I have observed, are more trustworthy than the Japanese. Why, in Japan you will find Chinese employes and clerks and accountants in most of the banks. They are better than the Japanese. They are splendid mathematicians. They are quick, accurate, patient and good business men. They are quiet and not so nervous as the Japanese are. The Japs are not steady in their habits, but the Chinese never change. It is their safety and that of their empire.

I was one of seven women who were the first foreigners ever to see the empress dowager. That was two years ago last fall. We were the first women not Chinese that the empress had ever seen. There were seven in our party and we went to the palace and were ushered into the throne room. The empress was not then on the throne, or at least was not recognized as empress and had no official standing with the legations. But she was seated on a sort of throne. The emperor was there also and we saw him at the same time. The first word other than Chinese ever heard by the empress was spoken in English. That is significant of the way in which the English language is invading the world. The wife of the British minister was dower of the party and spoke to the empress first. It was a pleasant event for us.

Language of Commerce.

The English language is already the language of commerce in China. It is used in commercial transactions largely. The traders and the business men use it. I think that in the future the English people will have great influence in China in commercial affairs and in the missionary work. But Chinese customs are tenacious and will endure, and China will be in the future much what it has been in the past.

MRS. EDWIN H. CONGER.



Mrs. John N. Baldwin. Mrs. E. H. Conger. Miss Conger. Miss Pierce. Mrs. A. B. Cummins. Mrs. J. J. Stewart.
NOTABLE WOMEN AT THE CONGER BANQUET.