

# Official Corruption in Chinese Government

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SHANGHAI, Aug. 23, 1900.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—This war is bound to result in the reorganization of the Chinese government. It will be of no value to the world if it does not. I have talked with some of the ablest foreigners in China and this opinion is almost universal. I have traveled considerably over the empire. Its government is honeycombed with corruption. It is like an old cheese filled with skippers, which if rendered out into soap grease could not furnish enough to wash China clean. This corruption is everywhere. The officials get small salaries, but they so line their pockets with bribes that the chief means of making fortunes is in buying offices. The empress dowager and the emperor have been selling offices. Nearly every official about the palace has been peddling his influence, and I hear of eunuchs who have made millions. Every Chinese city, and there are four thousand walled ones in the empire, has its corrupt officials, who grow fat by squeezing the people.

Some of the offices are worth fortunes. Take the taotai or mayor of this town of Shanghai. His annual salary is about \$2,500 and the usual term is for three years. How much do you think it costs to get the office? Just about \$200,000 in gold. The man pays this and makes money. He gets enough from bribes and other such sources to run his income up to a most \$30,000 a month, and it is a poor year in which he does not net a quarter of a million in gold. The last taotai told a friend of mine here that he wanted to stay in office just as long as he could, for every day was worth a clean \$1,000 to him.

Another profitable office is the taotaihip of Tien Tsin. Through that city passes the greater part of the trade of north China, amounting to tens of millions of dollars, and on all this the taotai gets a squeeze. The taotai of Canton is rich, as are also the taotais of Hankow, Wuchang, Nankin, Hangchow and a score of other cities.

There are eight viceroys in China, each of whom handles tens of millions. As long as he sends the requisite amount of taxes to Peking he is not troubled, and he takes his percentage on all that passes through his hands. The viceroys have their own armies. They each have far more power than the president of the United States. Their legal salaries are about \$50,000 a year each, but the salary is a bagatelle in comparison with their incomes.

### Magistrates Who Make \$30,000 a Year.

The lower officials make proportionately large sums, and almost every mandarin's button has to be paid for, and many which denote high rank cost in one way or another thousands of dollars. They are cheap, nevertheless, for most of the officials lay away a fortune in their three years' term. Dr. Hykes, the head of the American Bible Society of China, told me the other day the story of a magistrate of Kukiang, a town which lies several hundred miles above here on the banks of the Yangtze. The magistrate began life as a spectacle peddler. He became a yamen runner, finally rose to be a head policeman and at last was made magistrate. His name was Yuen. Said Dr. Hykes:

"I knew Yuen was quite wealthy and one day I asked him what his salary was. He replied that the government paid him \$75 a month. I knew that he was spending at least \$1,000 a month, and I asked him confidentially how he did it. He replied, as he winked the other eye, that it was true \$75 a month was not a large salary, but with ordinary care a thrifty man so paid could annually lay away about \$20,000.

"This man," continued Dr. Hykes, "was very shrewd and he well understood the nature of his fellows. After leaving the magistracy he got a big position at Peking, securing it through the building of some forts at Kukiang. The appropriation for the forts was a moderate one, but they were built within its limits, and at the close Yuen received a compliment from the governor of the province for his honest, economical work and his efficiency as a public servant. This compliment was sent to Peking and the result was his appointment. "I asked Yuen how the governor came to compliment him. He replied that it was reserved as far as the excellency of the work was concerned. He said he had made nothing out of the job, although he had done it for \$30,000 less than the contract price. "I took the \$30,000," said he, "and gave it to the governor as a present. He thereupon complimented me for the work and sent in a recommendation from which I got my fat job at Peking."

### The Old Empress as a Squeezor.

One of the worst squeezors in the whole of China is the old empress dowager. This is what I hear on every side. I learned many instances of her squeezing during my several visits to Peking. Just before this war began she had her agents going about over China blackmailing the chief officials. Li Hung Chang was sent by her to Canton in order that he might squeeze some millions out of the people there. Kang Yi, a short time before, made a trip during which he squeezed vast amounts out of the viceroys of the north, and through other agents she was drawing in gold and silver from a thousand sources. Everyone who came to the palace at Peking had to pay something to her or her underlings, and the viceroys decided to go on account of the extravagant expense.

Some of the chiefs aids of the old empress

ported. She deals in millions. Just about the time of the Chinese-Japanese war her sixtieth birthday occurred. It was planned that the celebration on that occasion should cost about \$20,000,000. The old woman had already received a great part of this at the time the war broke out, but she remitted

are now and then able to buy it in the curio shops.

### The Emperor's Clothes.

I have before me a list of things which were supplied to the emperor in one year from some of these imperial factories. One item is 1,000 pencils and 200 sheets of red

emperor, had received. Whether she ate or drank anything while at the empress dowager's palace is not stated.

The empress dowager practically ruled China while her son Tung Chi was emperor. He was a baby when his father died, and his mother was monarch until he became of age. She ruled through him until he got the smallpox and passed away, to give place to the son of Prince Chun, the present emperor. I have already spoken of Prince Chun's death.

Another curious death was that of the wife of Emperor Tung Chi, a Manchou girl named Aluteh. She was made empress of China in 1872, having been chosen by the empress dowager as her daughter-in-law. It is said that she was about to have a child at the time Emperor Tung Chi died of smallpox, but that she herself died before the child was born. Had she lived there would have probably been a change in the imperial regime and the empress dowager might have had to step down and out. I do not know that she had anything to do with her daughter-in-law Aluteh's death, but she certainly profited by it.

The empress dowager picked out the wives for the present emperor. This occurred twelve years ago and I happened to be in Peking at the time the choice was made. She took two sisters, one 15 and the other 13 years old, both the daughters of her brother, Chang Hail, and consequently her nieces. The 15-year-old girl became the empress and her younger sister a secondary wife or an "imperial concubine of second rank." These girls, of course, have been the tools of their imperial aunt and the emperor has had enemies and spies in his own family.

The character of the emperor I will discuss in a future letter. There is no doubt, however, but that the empress dowager should be carefully handled by the powers. China can be more easily ruled without her than with her and if there is any island like St. Helena, a good, long distance away from this part of the world, it will be well to incarcerate this female Napoleon upon it.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



PRINCE CHUN—THE EMPEROR'S FATHER, WHO DIED SUDDENLY. PI TSAU LI, THE EMPRESS DOWAGER'S FAVORITE EUNUCH.



in squeezing was her favorite eunuch. This was a man named Pi Tsau Li. He was the son of a shoemaker in the little town of Tung Chow. He was taken into the palace at the age of 14, and when he was 34 had already amassed about a million dollars. For a long time every fat appointment had to pass through his hands, and he made every official pay. He was hand in glove with Li Hung Chang, and it has been charged that they divided the commissions after giving the empress the lion's share.

I have heard of Pi Tsau Li getting \$100,000 for a single office, and when he died, only a few months ago, it is said that his estate amounted to 35,000,000 taels, or more than \$30,000,000 in gold. A pretty good fortune for a shoemaker's son!

Soon after Pi Tsau Li was taken into the palace his father was given a government position and all of his relatives got places. This man took bribes from all classes. He had a wonderful memory for those who sent him presents, and it became the fashion with every one who wished anything of the government to send a present to Pi Tsau Li in order that it might not be forgotten.

When this eunuch died he had about \$10,000,000 in portable securities, while his landed estates spread over three provinces, Chih Li, Shan Si and Honan. He owned whole streets of houses in Peking, as well as real estate in other cities. He was a lover of the fine arts, and he had one bronze which cost him about \$100,000. It was an urn, five feet high. Another bronze vessel, made, it is said, about 2000 B. C., was seven feet high. It cost an enormous sum.

Pi Tsau Li not only accepted bribes for the securing of offices, but he sold pardons as well. One official paid \$250,000 to be freed from arrest. This was Ching Kuan, a member of the board of revenue at Peking, who had a deficiency of more than \$500,000 in his accounts.

No one ever thoroughly understood the relation of Pi Tsau Li and the empress dowager. It was charged by some that the old lady was in love with him to such an extent that he could wheedle her into doing anything he wished.

### Wealth of the Empress Dowager.

The empress is very rich, and she probably has some millions of dollars' worth of diamonds and pearls sewed into her clothes. She had a vast amount of silver and gold in the palace, but whether this has been buried or is still there has not been re-

ported. Another shipment consisted of ninety pieces of gauze, and I see that the total orders for silk gauze during that year amounted to 3,400 rolls. In the same time the emperor required 600 handkerchiefs to blow his imperial nose, while to clothe his aristocratic limbs were sent 375 rolls of satin, 500 rolls of broadened satin and 3,000 pieces of other kinds of fine goods.

The embroideries made in the imperial shops are sent to the emperor and the empress by the boatload. The eunuchs steal from them, and some of the finest specimens get into the hands of peddlers, who bring them to the foreign legations and sell them. Such goods get as far south as Canton, and I have bought them myself at the hotels here at Shanghai.

If the present war drives the emperor and empress from Peking the soldiers will find splendid loot in the palace. The buildings are a perfect treasure house of choice goods. They probably contain more gold, silver and precious stones than did the palaces of the rajahs of India which were looted by the English soldiers years ago, and the soldiers of the great powers will not probably pay more respect to the rights of the Chinese than the British soldiers did to those of the Hindus.

There are some queer things going on in the imperial family. The Chinese have been so terrified by the old empress dowager that they dare not circulate any reports contrary to her will. No one really knows much about the emperor. He may be alive or he may be dead. A few months ago the report was circulated that he had escaped from his prison in the palace. No one knew where he had gone. At about the same time a well-educated, fine-looking Chinaman was arrested at Wuchang, a city about as far south of Peking as New York is distant from Chicago.

The judge at Wuchang found this young Chinaman guilty and ordered him to be hanged. His clothes were taken off and he was laid on his face on the floor. The bamboo rods were just about to bring their rods down upon him when it was discovered that he was tattooed with the imperial dragon, a design which is only permitted to the royal family. The matter was hushed up and the man allowed to go free, the officers fearing for their lives that it might be his imperial majesty. How true the story is I do not know. It was whispered to me the other night by one of the highest of the Chinese officials.

### Not Healthy to Oppose Old Dowager.

There is one thing upon which the people seem to be unanimous, and that is that it is not healthy for a Chinese to oppose the old dowager. She is charged with being as free with her poison and knife as were the emperors during the last days of Rome. I have heard it stated that she materially assisted her husband in getting to a better land. After he died, she ruled in company with his first wife, known as the eastern empress. The eastern empress had a quarrel with the empress dowager, and soon after this she grew sick and passed away. I have heard it whispered that Marquis Tseng and Prince Chun died unnatural deaths just at the right time to benefit this remarkable woman.

The trouble the present emperor had with her was chiefly caused by the death of his mother in 1896. The emperor's mother thought the empress dowager was not treating her son rightly, and she called at the palace at Eho Park and protested against the extraordinary demands which the dowager made upon him. This made the dowager empress angry. She ordered her servants to take away her guest's sedan chair and sent her back to Peking in a common cart. The old lady died the next day, and it was currently reported that her death was due to the mortification from the treatment she, the mother of an



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## Confederate Seal

"The result of the last confederate council of war held at Abbeville, S. C., in May, 1865, was soon known all over Abbeville and the generals and the secretary of war were kept busy for hours signing honorable discharges for the tired soldiers, who immediately applied for them," writes Mrs. Thaddeus Horton in the October Ladies' Home Journal. "During the evening Mr. Benjamin asked for a hatched and with it he defaced the confederate seal. About 12 o'clock the same night the confederate party continued its retreat in the direction of Washington, Ga., and while crossing the Savannah river in the darkness some one suggested that the seal be thrown overboard. This plea was at once approved and when the boat reached midstream it was dropped with a dull splash into the sandy riverbed of that beautiful southern watercourse, where to this day, its mission all fulfilled, it serenely rests."

## VARICOCELE

And Resulting

## NERVO-VITAL DISEASES

My scientific investigations have shown that Varicocele and Associated Pelvic diseases, by their reflex effects upon the Nervous System cause Paralysis and other grave Nervo-Vital Disorders.

The Richardson Method, which I originated and administered personally at my Sanitarium, cures these diseases rapidly, and to stay cured. Those who write a careful description of their case as they understand it, will receive my professional opinion without charge, also copies of my publications. If books are to be sent sealed, inclose 10 cents to prepay postage. My consultation hours are: Daily, 10 to 1; evenings, 7 to 8; Sundays, 10 to 1. Special appointments for private interview may be made by telephoning South 1029 (long-distance connections).



"Good Riddance to Bad Rubbish."

D. D. RICHARDSON, M. D.  
1266-74 MICHIGAN AV.,  
CHICAGO, ILL.