

their heels in the ante-chamber of the palace of Peking quite as often as they do in the White House at Washington. When they are ushered into his presence they get down on their knees and bump their heads again and again on the floor, and they have to remain on their knees while before him. Not long ago he took a notion to learn English, and two students of the college at Peking were appointed as his teachers. He recited his lessons at 1 o'clock in the morning, and for some time these boys who acted as teachers had to remain on their knees while his majesty butchered the king's English before them. He kept up his studies for some time, but I was told in Peking that he had given up the attempt.

The Emperor of China is, to a certain extent, the editor of the famous Peking Gazette. This is the oldest newspaper of the world, and it has been published almost daily for eight hundred years. It was read by the Chinese centuries before America was discovered, and it was six hundred years old when the first daily newspaper of our civilization began its publication, in 1615. It is nothing like our newspapers, however. The copies, which are sent all over China, are more like the cheapest of patent medicine almanacs than anything else. They are bound in yellow covers, and are printed from blocks on the thinnest of rice paper. A page of the Peking Gazette is about three inches wide and seven inches long, and there are sixteen pages and upward in each issue. None of the issues contain one-hundredth the amount of the material in a Sunday News. The newspaper begins at the back instead of at the front. The lines run up and down instead of across the top, and you read from right to left across the page instead of from left to right, as with us. It has no advertisements, no editorials and no social gossip. The government allows no comments on its actions, and it is a crime to add to or subtract from its matter in its republication. The newspaper is made up of official acts and reports, and such of the reports as the emperor thinks ought to be published are looked over by him and he marks with a red pencil his comments upon them. These are pasted upon bill boards outside of the palace, and the scribes copy them into books, which are sent out each day. These first copies are the original issues of the Peking Gazette. They are beautifully engrossed, and they command a price of about a hundred dollars a year. Private printing firms buy them, and the engravers make blocks, from which the cheaper copies are printed. Some editions go for thirty cents a month, and numbers of Chinese families club together and buy these cheaper editions, so that a man may pay perhaps one-twentieth of a cent for reading a copy of the Peking Gazette. I have a bound volume of this paper, which has been translated into English, and I get translations every week in the English newspapers which I receive from China. Practically nothing is as yet given about the Chinese Japanese war, except that in the issue of August 28 it is stated that "the empress dowager has sent 4,000 boxes of cooling pills to the soldiers in Corea," and the couriers probably bring the news in on horse-back and retail it to the people. There is no doubt that

there is more lying done in the dissemination of official reports than can possibly be committed by American reporters, and I learn from Peking that the people are kept in entire ignorance of what is going on in the war with Japan.

It is doubtful whether the emperor himself understands his real situation. He has, I venture, never reviewed his own army, and he knows nothing about military tactics. It is a common amusement with him to go out and shoot with a bow and arrow, and his only experience as to traveling by railroad has been in a small train of cars which a French syndicate, who wanted to get railroad concessions, presented to him. The train cost them, I am told, something like one hundred thousand dollars. The emperor refused to accept it as a gift, and sent them back the sum of ten thousand dollars, in order to relieve himself from any obligation. It is now six years since the present was made, and they have gotten no concessions. I saw these cars in Tien Tsin some years ago, when they were on their way to the emperor. They were carried into Peking by water, and his majesty had a track laid in the palace grounds, and they were run for a short time with steam. This, however, was too fast for his majesty, and I understand that he now harnesses up his eunuchs to the engine and has them whipped right royally by the brakeman, as he rides through the grounds. The emperor knows nothing of modern civilization and modern warfare. He does not even know his own country, and did he possess a great character it would have been ruined long since by his surronudings.

This is the man who is supposed to be at the head of the great Chinese empire, and who ought to be directing the war with Japan. He is, I am told, largely governed by his eunuchs. They have been his closet associates throughout his life, and different estimates state that he has all the way from four to ten thousand of these eunuchs in the palace. Our own minister, Col. Denby, says that he has actual information that there are at least four thousand, and when you remember that this immense colony is scattered over an area not much larger than that of a farm, you will see that eunuchs are thicker than blackberries in August. They are graded in different departments, and each has his own duties. Those of ordinary rank receive from two to twelve dollars a month, but they make fortunes out of squeezing and stealing, and there is one eunuch in the palace who is said to be worth millions. His name is Pi Tsiao Li, and he is the confidential servant of the old empress dowager. He is a great office broker, and I heard of instances of his getting a hundred thousand dollars and upward for single offices, and I have no doubt that he divides his profits with the old empress. All of the officials of Peking are afraid of him, and though he began life as the son of a shoemaker, he has more power than many of the princes. His father was a cobbler in the city of Tung Chow, about fifteen miles from Peking, but since his son has become so powerful the old man has been elevated to a fat office, and he has a feather in his hat. I saw a number of instances myself in Peking which gave

me an insight into the stealing of these eunuchs. The finest of the silks and embroideries of China are made for the emperor. He has vast silk looms at Nanking, and he has great porcelain factories in different parts of China. He receives his satin by the cartload, and one of his recent orders, as I see by the Peking Gazette, included thirty-four hundred rolls of silk gauze, five hundred rolls of brocades, and three hundred and seventy rolls of satin. He buys his pencils by the thousand, and paper is carried to Peking for him by the shipload. He receives many presents, and he can't keep track of all his possessions. The eunuchs sneak goods out of the palace and hand them over to second-hand peddlers, and I was offered gowns which were probably made for the royal harem again and again during my stay in Peking, and you can buy fine pieces of embroidery there with the five-clawed dragon upon them, which is the imperial coat-of-arms, for a song. Many a fine piece of porcelain is smuggled out of the palaces and sold, and the officials probably get a squeeze on all orders of goods that they make for the emperor.

Just one word more about the eunuchs. The laws provide that none but those of royal blood shall have the right to employ them, and princesses can have thirty eunuchs, while the nephews of the emperor are restricted to twenty. Every fifth year certain of the officials of China are required to furnish for the use of the palaces eight young eunuchs each, and these princes are paid three hundred dollars apiece for them. Even the priests who attend to the worship of the harem are eunuchs, and the emperor goes no place without them. There were several hundred guarding the roads when the foreign minister came into the audience, and the old empress dowager had quite a corps of them.

The empress dowager will be sixty years old next month. She is said to be a most remarkable woman, and she has been practically the ruler of China for the past generation. She was the secondary wife or the first concubine of the Emperor Hien Fung, who died along about the time of the beginning of our civil war, and she has been practically the boss of the harem and the empire since then. She was at the head of the empire during a greater part of the Kaiping rebellion. She managed its affairs during its war with France, and she had a little taste of Russian diplomacy in her fuss with the czar of some years ago. She is said to have a mind of her own, and all of the Chinese respect and fear her. She is a stickler as to form, and she insists that all business shall be done through the young emperer, though she really directs what he is to do. She is very vain, and she had consented to the spending of about twenty million dollars on the celebration of her birthday this year, and this money was being collected for the purpose when the war with Japan broke out. A large part of it is to be applied to the war, and if the Japanese approach Peking before the celebration it is probable that the old empress will really give the whole of it to the war, as she has promised to do. The empress dowager is even more secluded than the emperor, and when she receives her officials she sits behind a screen and