

A NATION IN MOURNING

THE CHINESE ARE STILL WAITING FOR THEIR DEAD RULERS.

Peking, China, 1899.—The Chinese are still mourning the emperor and the great empress dowager. The emperor has already had two funerals, and will have a third before he is finally laid away in the great western tomb. His monument there is now being built, and it will cost \$1,000,000 before it is completed. Two years from now the remains of the great dowager lie in a lacquered coffin here in Peking, and preparations are being made to carry her to her last resting place. Her last will cost more than that of Kwang Su, and her funeral expenses will run high into the millions.

A NATION IN MOURNING.

It is now almost a year since the death of these monarchs, but the period of mourning is just at its beginning. It will last for three years, and during that time the highest of the imperial clan will keep on their sackcloth and will have their regular periods of weeping. Many of the high officials will wear mourning buttons, and the baby emperor, as frequently reported as giving a wall for his grandma, the dowager, in final atonement.

The death of a monarch means much to the great Chinese empire. No one who does not understand the reverence those people have for their rulers and their holy feelings for ancestral worship can appreciate what has been going on here during the past nine or 10 months. I was in Mukden, Manchuria, at the time of the imperial death, and when I reached Peking the capital was still undergoing its 27 days of deep mourning. I can describe it best by comparing similar conditions to exist in the United States.

200,000,000 UNSHAVED HEADS.

The mourning was especially hard on the barbers. Supposing China to have a population of 400,000,000, there are half that number of men and boys, each of whom has his hair shaved over with a razor about twice a week. The Chinese gentleman would rather go unshaved than shaved. Now, when one has shaved his hair from his boyhood the hair grows like a bamboo sprout. The result was that a week or so after the mourning period began these millions of Chinese scalps were covered with bristles like those of a porcupine. They stood out on all sides except where the queue grew forth from the crown. The barbers, who are numbered by millions, had nothing to do but to shave the heads of those who came near starving that the government advanced them money until the mourning period was over.

Here and there a man broke the law and had his head shaved. All such who were discovered were punished. In Tientsin a clerk in one of the banks shaved his head three days after the death of the empress dowager. He was arrested as soon as he came out on the street and was fined \$250 in silver. This is equal to over \$100 gold, and it was, I venture, one of the costliest shaves upon earth.

Here in Peking a young Chinese dandy came to a barber and begged for a shave. The barber replied that he feared he would be arrested, and the dandy thereupon promised that he would stand all the fines. The barber consented. The man took a seat on the stool, and his head was just half shaved when a policeman came in and took both barber and customer off to the court. The judge heard the complaint, said at its close he imposed a fine of \$20 upon each. The dandy paid the fine, but as he did so, he pointed to his head and asked the judge:

"But what am I to do? I can't go about with my head half shaved." "As to that," replied the judge, "you may have the job completed, but a second offense of this kind will land you in prison."

This custom of stopping shaving on the death of the emperor goes back to the days of Chien Lung, the second great emperor of the present dynasty, who is said to have inaugurated it when his favorite wife died. His grief was such that he ordered his officials not to shave their heads for 100 days; and thereafter a similar order was sent forth upon the death of an emperor.

HOW IT AFFECTED THE WOMEN.

The imperial deaths had a serious effect upon the women of the empire. The laws provided that they must take off their jewelry within three days and lay aside their silks and satins for three months. All wore dull colors, and some clad themselves in white. It was against the laws to wear red, and

any woman found on the streets with a red dress was ordered back home. A young Chinese lady of the city disregarded the law and started out to call, wearing a pair of red slippers. A policeman saw her as she crossed a muddy place in the street. He stopped her and pulled off her shoes. She begged to be allowed to wear them back home, saying that she would put on white slippers hereafter. He refused, and she knelt back in her front yards, pink, although the temperature was then about freezing. Another regulation prohibited the practice and powdering of the face. This means serious on the Manchurian girls, who plaster their complexions with white and tin them with rouge, as well as upon the Chinese, most of whom do likewise.

ALL WEDDINGS HELD UP.

The regulation that prohibited marriages for 27 days created great consternation. It was known about two days beforehand that such an edict would be issued, and during that period there was an epidemic of weddings all over the empire. Every city and town had a score of them, and although Peking was surrounded in almost an account of the deaths, the other cities were alive with weddings and their festivities. Even here there were many marriages. In the hurry the brides and grooms were sometimes mixed up, and the wrong parties found themselves tied together in the bond matrimonial. According to Chinese custom, the groom furnishes the clothes for his bride, and he seldom sees her before the wedding. She always comes veiled to the ceremony. At a wedding which occurred at this time in Tientsin, when the bride unveiled, the groom said: "Those are not the clothes which I furnished for you," said the matchmaker.

It was then discovered that two weddings were slated for that night in the same block, and that the wrong brides had been carried in their closed chairs to the wrong grooms.

This was not discovered until the ceremonies had been performed, and it took considerable money to buy the officials to untie the knots and bring the right couples together.

500 FOR PLAYING THE BANJO.

For a certain time after weddings were resumed it was prohibited to use music in connection with them, and during the period of deep mourning all noisy festivity was punished. A high Chinese scholar of Peking who played the banjo was fined \$500 and given 25 lashes.

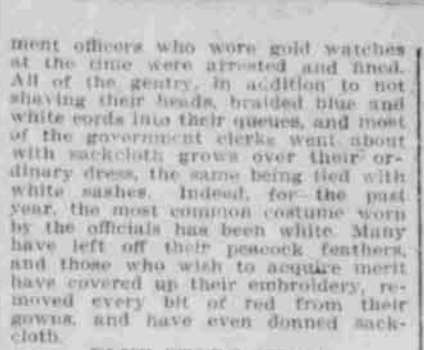
In the city of Wuchang a Greek had been granted the right to open a biograph show for a month. He had just begun to exhibit his motion pictures when the imperial death occurred. The officials said the show must close, and the Greek demanded damages. He was paid \$1,250 in lieu of his show, which was just opposite Hankow, which was given scissors the day the mourning began and were instructed to cut from the caps of the men every red button they saw. They were ordered also to cut into pieces any red clothing that might be worn. An official of this same region shaved his scalp contrary to law. He was once put into a cage, that the heavy board framed work five feet square was fitted around his neck so that it hung upon his shoulders, extending so far out that he could not touch his head with his hand. After that the police smeared his scalp with pitch and turned him loose on the streets.

THE SAD COLORS ARE WHITE AND BLUE.

In our country black is the color for mourning. Among the Chinese the deepest grief is represented by white, and half-mourning by blue. Red and gold are the emblems of rejoicing. The day after the death of the emperor an edict was sent out that the red buttons must be taken off the caps of all men and boys and that white or blue buttons should take their places. During my stay in Mukden I had an official acting as my interpreter. He had been wearing a bright yellow satin gown with a black cap on which was a red button. On the day of the emperor's death he appeared in blue buttons and a black cotton gown. At the same time the officials there came out in white sackcloth, and many in gowns of white sheepskin, with the wool on the outside. The police put white bands on their sleeves, and all college students dressed likewise.

Shortly thereafter an edict was sent forth that three years no furs except the white sheepskins could be worn by the officials. This seriously affected the fur market, and other costly furs going down like a shot. Today most furs are a drug on the market, and some of the merchants have been ruined by the emperor's death. I am acquainted with an American who bought a sable robe worth \$2,000 for \$320. He got a tiger skin for \$60 and fox skins for almost nothing. Nearly all the officials have winter costumes of silk and satin lined with choice furs. They are buying none now, and the only furs in demand are lambskins and sheepskins.

The mourning period has also affected the traders in silks and satins. The officials who dared come out in gay clothing during the period of deepest grief, lost their office, and the police punished all such. Four of the govern-



High Manchu Girl

BLUE STORE SIGNS.

The putting on of mourning has not been confined to the people. Many things material, ordinarily red and gold, have been covered with blue or white. At the railroad stations the baggage carts had blue paper pasted over them; the trolley cars of Tientsin have used white flags instead of red and for a time they had white cloths over the red signs on their sides. For 10 days after the emperor died every policeman in China wore a wide, white band around his left arm, and for a few days after that every merchant sat a table covered with a white cloth on the street in front of his shop. The tables contained two mourning candlesticks of white pewter and a pewter bowl, in which sticks of incense were burned. All of the above signs of red and gold were covered with blue paper, on which new signs were painted, and even the numbers on the doors of doopriates were made white and blue.

ment officers who wore gold watches at the time were arrested and fined. All of the gentry, in addition to not shaving their heads, braided blue and white cords into their queues, and most of the government clerks went about with sackcloth gowns over their ordinary dress, the same being tied with white washes. Indeed, for the past year, the most common costume worn by the officials has been white. Many have left off their peacock feathers, and those who wish to acquire merit have covered up their embroidery, removed every bit of red from their gowns, and have even donned sackcloth.

and heads were unshaven and their finger nails uncut. Among the mourners, however, there were some singular exceptions. I noticed that many of the servants and officials had on the brightest of joyful red gowns and that their scalps were shaved clean. They were in striking contrast with the sackcloth about them, and I asked who they might be. They were the servants immediately connected with the baby emperor, who had just come to the throne; and it hence was improper for them to wear emblems of grief upon such an event.

At the time of the crowning of the emperor all the officials suspended their mourning and came out in gay clothing while the celebration took place. Immediately thereafter they put on mourning again.

WAITING FOR THE DOWAGER.

An important part of the official celebration was the waiting. This was done by the officials all over the empire. While I was in Mukden they came to the palace at about half past four in the morning, dressed in white, with girdles of sackcloth. They were divided into two parties, the military and the civilian, one standing on one side of the room and the other on the opposite side. In front of them were the imperial tablets. At a given signal from an official all of these white-robed men got on their knees and bumped their heads on the floor as they screamed out a weird, wild wail. At another signal they rose to their feet, and at a third went down again and again wailed. This was done for

three days succeeding the deaths of the emperor and the empress dowager. Similar proceedings occurred at every official yamen throughout the empire, and in some places the waiting continued longer. There was also waiting for the empress, and the especially devout Chinese grew hysterical under it, and some went into fits.

The grieving of the imperial clan will continue long after that of the common people has passed away. The lowest classes of the Chinese gave up their mourning at the end of 100 days, and some even put on half-mourning at the end of 27 days. All members of the imperial family must continue to mourn for three years. During that time they can engage in no festivities, and they will not be allowed to have children. It is a disgrace for a family to bring forth a child while the mourning period lasts. Indeed, one of the reasons for the boxer uprising is said to have been the rage of the people against the last emperor, Kwang Su, because he was born at such a time.

FUNERAL MONEY.

During the long funeral procession which accompanied the remains of the emperor to the western tombs, the funeral money was thrown into the air, and I am told that 125,000 taels of such money was burned every day to pay Kwang Su's expenses until he was consigned to his grave. This money was in the shape of discs of white paper, each about as big around as the bottom of a tin cup, and with a square hole in the center. It was gathered up by the coolies who followed the procession, and sold by them for 20 cents a bag.

Paper money of this kind is to be found in every Chinese city. There are scores of stores in Peking which sell nothing else. The money is of silver and gold paper, made up in the shape of discs or of shoes to imitate the silver taels used in Chinese cities. This is spirit money. You can also buy spirit clothing, consisting of gowns made of paper, and also spirit trunks, which are paper boxes. Such things are burned at the graves, the idea being that they will serve for the wants of the departed. Another theory is that they peopulate the ghosts, which hover about the dead and probably charge for their services.

QUEER MOURNING CUSTOMS.

Indeed, the funeral and mourning customs of the Chinese are so strange that it would take a book to describe them. There are five degrees of mourning, each of which has its own regulations. There is a certain kind of mourning for parents, another for grandparents and great-grandparents, another for brothers and sisters, and others for uncles and aunts and for dear friends. There is deep mourning and half-mourning. In the deepest sackcloth is worn without hem or border. In the next grade one may have blue clothes with a sackcloth belt, and in others he may wear plain clothes, such as white, gray and black. During three years after the death of a parent no silks should be worn, and the man, if an official, should retire to private life to wall. This was required of Li Hung Chang when his mother died, but his services were such that the emperor dowager begged him to omit the custom for the sake of the state. When a death occurs in a Chinese family its members put on sackcloth or white clothes, brush white into their

queues and wear white buttons on the caps. They send out mourning cards of white paper. At the end of six months or so they go into half-mourning. They change their white clothes for blue ones, blue buttons on their caps and blue threads into their queues. They send out blue cards, and on them are printed the characters which mean "Grief not so bitter as before, and mourning that the members of the family of the world, and that their relations are allowed to call to condole with them. Later still they drop the blue and wear common to their daily life."

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