

## TOLL OF RUBBER INDUSTRY

Fat dividends, blood money, the lives of thousands of men, women and children. Cautious and bitter though the comment was, the truth of these words uttered by a famous divine at a recent dinner, at which a guest was one of the big dividends paid by a rubber company with which he was connected, could not be denied. The money from rubber often represents blood money. It is not the fault of those who invest their money in rubber companies, although humanity's fault upon them to give every support to the present agitation against the horrible conditions of slavery which exist on many rubber plantations. It is the fault of agents, overseers and planters, who, taking advantage of the ignorance and helplessness of natives, force them into conditions of slavery five times worse than those which existed before the emancipation of the American negro.

A few years ago, thanks to the untiring efforts of Mr. E. D. Morel, the Congo Reform Association, and Sir Arthur Casan Doyle, the conditions were remedied somewhat, we held our hands in horror when told of the terrible atrocities which were committed by the Belgians in the rubber forests of Central Africa of men and boys being flogged to death, mutilated and shot, because they did not collect enough rubber; and of women and children being indiscriminately slaughtered because they were useless. During fifteen years of the most violent exploitation, King Leopold was known to have extracted about 70,000 tons of rubber, valued at \$21,000,000 sterling, and the most conservative estimates went to show that the loss in human life averaged somewhere between 100 and 175 lives per ton. But today there are thousands of people in this country and on the continent holding shares in rubber companies whose dividends are only earned by an appalling sacrifice of human life.

## 40,000 Lives Sacrificed.

In Mexico and Peru the conditions are quite as bad as they were in the Congo, and the stories of the Putumayo atrocities which have recently been published are in no sense exaggerated. It is alleged, indeed, that during the last 12 years about 40,000 tons of rubber have been taken out of the Putumayo district of Peru at a cost of 40,000 lives, women and children, and all others who failed to do so, to some extent, being ruthlessly slaughtered. As one who has spent several years in Putumayo recently put it: "There, one pound of rubber is worth more than a man's life."

Planters and agents will tell you that the natives come to them of their own free will, sign contracts for labor for a certain period for certain wages, and are allowed to depart on the expiration of the contract if they wish to do so. To some extent no doubt, this is quite true; but what they do not tell people is how the natives are tricked into signing contracts, robbed of their earnings, subjected to revolting brutality, starved, herded together like cattle, and die in thousands.

Tricked. Some startling revelations concerning the manner in which native labor is recruited are given by a Times correspondent. When rubber trees are dis-

covered, an agent, usually a half-caste, is contracted to secure labor, the competition for which is enormous. He is given money, with which he tempts the natives. He draws a highly colored picture of the life on a rubber plantation, and the profits the Indian will make, plies him with drink perhaps, and finally obtains a paper signed, or alleged to be signed, pledging their miserable possessions of a hut, a potato patch, and a llama against a contract to gather so many quintals of rubber (a quintal being 100 lbs.). When the Indian recovers from his drunkenness, he is not usually anxious to comply, but the law permits him to be forcibly dragged away, or at any rate, whined at it.

He ultimately reaches, in varying circumstances, the rubber estate. He knows nothing of accounts or of the Spanish language. He is debilitated with everything; he is heavily in debt; he has to purchase his tools, his clothing, his food, at exorbitant rates. He may be imagined as paying for it all prospectively in rubber, for which he has been promised the equivalent of about \$2.00 per quintal. He is put under half-caste overseers, who are paid from \$10 monthly and who seem to be selected for their villainous character and cunning. They and often multi-murderers.

The Indians are herded in sheds, with a total disregard of the most elementary laws of sanitation. The consequence is that they contract all sorts of diseases. There is no medical service, and nobody seems to care what becomes of the poor Indian so long as he is capable of bringing in a few pounds of rubber. Parents sell their daughters, while men, women and children are bought and sold for personal services. And when it is ascertained that the forests are sanctuaries for all manner of criminals, and that agents and overseers are often men already branded by a life of crime, it may be imagined what little sympathy they have for the helpless Indian.

A no less appalling story comes from Southern Mexico, where, in the abject country, "bloodsucking" rates of modern finance, as they have been termed, flourish and make enormous fortunes out of rubber and the slavery of the miserable poor laborers. Here the contract-labor system, which was brought into existence by the scarcity of "volunteer" labor in the tropics, undoubtedly the worst form of slavery this world has ever seen. A rubber planter's interest in his poor laborers expires with their contract. Consequently he works them so thoroughly that a large percentage, sometimes the majority, die from exhaustion and disease, brought about by the insanitary conditions of life and work that are forced upon them.

Informed by the labor contractor in the city of Mexico that he will receive good board, easy work, and a full wage of fifty cents a day from the moment he sets foot on the plantation, he finds on arrival that fifteen dollars' worth of goods have been charged up against him—or, rather, he finds this out at the end of his service. Adding seven dollars or so for a peate (straw mat), mess pan, and outfit of cotton clothing—worth actually very little over a dollar—and deducting the credit of four cents a day at the plantation store for cigars, it takes him exactly 188 days to clear his debt to the plantation. Five more than his six months' term of service.

Thus, of course, if he is never sick,

as he is charged for his board when not working, each sick day adds two to the length of his term. When his money runs out, which happens very quickly—how he has to replace them at the same exorbitant price, and as he cannot return home till he has earned railroad fare, it is seldom that he is able to leave the plantation before the end of the year. Many do not leave until they are carried out, feet first, to the secret graveyard in the jungle.

Stories Which Cannot Be Told. This, however, is really but a slight picture of the appalling condition of things on some of the Mexican and Peruvian rubber plantations. There are terrible stories, which have been substantiated, that cannot be put into print. Sufficient, however, has been said to show that crimes are committed by the Belgians in the rubber industry which, to say the least, must shock every decent minded person.

## AERIAL GUNNERY.

The trials of the new machine gun for use on aeroplanes by the Royal Flying Corps are proceeding on satisfactory lines, says the London Standard. Lieutenant G. de Havilland has had a Maxim gun mounted on a government-built aeroplane, and assisted by Mr. W. Wilson, one of the factory experts, has been trying the effect of rapid fire targets representing rival aeroplanes while flying at full speed. The experiments are being carried out on the Fox Hills near the Command field firing range, the targets being spread on the ground and on the hillsides. At varying heights the aeroplanes have been seen over the area, and as the dummy aeroplane has come into view the machine gun has been brought into action, the idea being to hit the target in such a manner as would prove disabling to a real aeroplane. The results of the trials are being kept confidential.

The greatest difficulty to be overcome is that of correctly judging the distance of the target from the machine. At first the rapid recoil of the gun rendered the control of the aeroplane very difficult to maintain, but this has been overcome by improving the mounting of the gun, by which the recoil is absorbed, thus enabling the pilot to keep a perfectly steady course, and consequently aiming in a material way the better aiming of the weapon. The gunner sits in front of the aeroplane, which is fitted with a propeller instead of a propeller screw, and the gun is mounted on a ball and socket mounting between his knees, thus giving him a wide field of action. The pilot sits immediately behind the gunner, and is able to converse, thus ensuring complete co-operation.

The principle underlying the idea of utilizing the machine gun on the aeroplane is for use against rival aircraft, and not for attacking troops on the ground. It is hoped so to improve the idea that rival aircraft coming within a 2,000-yard radius of the machine will be brought under rapidly aimed fire of a deadly description. It is intended when sufficient data have been obtained by these experiments to pass all officers of the Royal Flying Corps who will be placed in the idea that rival aircraft coming within a 2,000-yard radius of the machine will be brought under rapidly aimed fire of a deadly description. It is intended when sufficient data have been obtained by these experiments to pass all officers of the Royal Flying Corps who will be placed in the idea that rival aircraft coming within a 2,000-yard radius of the machine will be brought under rapidly aimed fire of a deadly description.



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## Memoirs of Li Hung Chang

CHINA'S VICEROY TELLS OF WORLD TOUR

Series of Remarkable Articles by Greatest Statesman Ever Produced in Chinese Kingdom. No. 10.

## THE UNITED STATES IN BOXER TROUBLES.

According to his Memoirs, Li Hung Chang, then Governor, foresaw as early as 1889 that of the Two Kuang provinces, China would be embroiled with foreign nations over the Boxers, or Great Sword Society, which was becoming strong in the north. In April of that year this entry is found in his diary:

For the third time I have memorialized the Throne to trample under foot the I-ho-Kuan (Patriotic Peace Fists) but as no action was taken upon my memorial, I have again memorialized the Throne with the idea that China has nothing to gain and everything to lose by opposing the so-called foreign devils. It would be utterly impossible to drive them out, in the first place; in the second, they could not be kept out, and last, but not least, the country would be poorer in many ways if the foreigners ever withdrew, willingly or otherwise.

During my last visit to the northern provinces, I saw every effort to impress the truth of these views upon the court. The Empress is apparently in sympathy with these sentiments, and Jung Lo (the most influential and intimate counsellor of the Dowager) is really a strong and abiding friend of the Christians. But Prince Tuan secretly favors the Patriotic Peace Fists, and will do everything he can to persuade their majesties that the society can exterminate the foreigners if they are not interfered with. "Tuan has a great deal to say about this," said all that Tse Hai believes what he says and secretly favors the Great Swords.

Just a year ago, the time of writing the above—in April, 1900—the Viceroy makes this observation: I have received from the Throne the following letter, which I am cauding to believe in but for effect abroad:

"The establishment by the rural population in each province of militia for their own protection, and for the preservation of their lives and families, is at bottom simply the good old ancestral practice of keeping a lookout and lending mutual assistance, and so long as these concerned mind their own business there is no reason why they should be interfered with. 'All that is in danger is that among such persons the good and bad may get mixed and that pretext may be taken to raise trouble with native Christians. It must be remembered that the Emperor regards all with equal benevolence without distinction of territorial division, for which reason the populations concerned should obey the stipulations and refrain from any violent act to their private resentments in such wise as to cause hostility and render themselves liable to punishment."

"Let us tell your Excellency that we expect the governors-general and governors concerned to give strict directions to local authorities, to issue plain speaking proclamations as occasion may require, calling upon all persons to attend to their own affairs and always keep on peaceful terms with others, not ignoring the spirit of these earnest exhortations."

This is all nonsense, it means nothing right. I know the country will now get into trouble over these fanatical ideas. But there are not numerous in the provinces and dare not show their heads. He writes (supposedly in May, 1900):

Hurried telegrams from the Throne have come to me urging that I suppress any lawlessness in my territory. This angers me, for it is but a blind and subtlety. There is no lawlessness here and there will be none. I have sent messengers every day of late to Jung Lo urging him to employ all means in his power to win the emperor's dowager strongly over to the side of the foreigners. She is wavering, for she wants to believe what both of her strongest advisers say, while these two men (Jung Lo and Prince Tuan) are on diametrically opposite sides.

Q. I am sorry for China! If the legations are destroyed the foreign nations will march through the land with fire and sword. Even the United States our friend and benefactor, will send her armies and fleets against us. Later without date:

The final blow has been struck by these wretches of the Patriotic Peace Fists with the killing of the German minister, Von Kettler, whom I knew and whom I first met in Germany. What will become of China now? Still heaven is aware that I have urged and urged against the bandits until I am weary. Prince Tuan, who was born a hater of the Christians, and has grown more hateful with his years, has probably convinced the throne that if the Boxers are not interfered with they will clean the land of all foreigners. What hellish rubbish! His ignorance must be paid for by his country.

Though it is evident that Li was deeply aroused over the troubles at the north he seems to have been sufficiently at peace with himself to conduct an ancient ceremony at Canton for the next entry in his notes reads:

Today we performed the full ceremony of the Tilling of the Soil. All my officials and myself in full court dress, by chair to the Temple of Shen Nung, beyond the East Gate, and performed our obligations. The great and illustrious Shen Nung is the Divine Husbandman who reigned 4,700 years ago. It was he who invented agriculture and to him the world owes the most sublime reverence and respect.

Some time later he writes: It is as I expected: there is war in the north, and Tuan has treacherously persuaded the throne to let the troops join with the Boxers in an attempt to exterminate the foreigners. My heart is sick—I wash my hands of the whole affair.

The diary is silent upon the happenings of the following seven weeks, with the exception of the single line: "I have been summoned to the north and will leave at once, hoping to patch up suitable peace with the allies." He next writes at Tientsin (presumably late in August): Here I am once more in the same old house I occupied for so long and where I spent so many happy days and nights—and unhappy ones too.

I may add; for to be Viceroy of China and Grand Secretary at the same time brought many cares and troubles to my mind. Yet all the difficulties were surmounted, and many good things accomplished; therefore, as the sum total, I was happy and satisfied. Now my great task—perhaps the last great task of my career—is to save China. Their Majesties are in temporary exile and the foreigners are in control of the capital. I am glad to think that many of the ministers who got our country into this terrible fix are themselves in trouble and will be brought to book. I do not glory in the death of any man, but there are some heads I shall be pleased to see chopped off. One man in particular (the Viceroy refers undoubtedly to Prince Tuan) deserves fully, if any man ever did, the line: "The death of a thousand cuts." I hope it will be the reward of his damnable meddling.

All the foreign nations are against us, I would seem. No, there is an exception, and the exception may prove our salvation from being sliced up like a watermelon. The Americans are, of course, acting with France, Russia, England, Germany and Japan, but at the same time I have received assurances from the American commander and from the Washington government that the United States will oppose morally and physically, if necessary, the partition of China.

My greatest fear now is from the Germans and Russians. The Germans because of the death of their Minister, are despatching regiments every day for China and are sending one of their greatest field marshals to command their troops. If they are called a big army in the capital and demand an indemnity such as they did of the French, and stay until it is paid, I fear they will never leave us.

The Russians, too, have a tremendous force in Manchuria and along the Siberian Railway; and if there is an agreement between them and the Powers to make them relent. My hope, however, is centered in the attitude of the United States.

Later, same—Cable despatches from our Minister at Washington are reassuring. The American Government is confident its note to the other Powers proposing a joint indemnity to be agreed upon by myself, acting for China and the foreign representatives will meet with the approval of the Foreign Offices. Good!

Sept. 12, Pekin—I have learned from a source that is beyond question that the Powers had determined immediately after the capture of the city to make a division of China between them. Yet it seems that so many dogs after the carcass of a beast, they could not agree upon their respective shares. It was determined that the sheep will get away.

Sept. 15—I visited the Russian Legation today and had a meeting with the foreign ministers. The position taken in this matter by the American nation means the ruin of China. The United States has won over the other Powers to her way of thinking. Thanks be to the spirits of our Ancestral Fathers, our country yet may be saved from slicing.

Tientsin, Oct. 9.—Today I received an American newspaper man and gave him a lengthy interview. I would not have talked at all with him but for two things: his paper, which is one of great influence at Washington, has been an advocate in all this miserable affair; and, secondly, he told me that he tried to get an interview with me at the Philadelphia Junction but failed. So I made it up with him and sent the thanks of China and myself to those fair dealing people who live in the land of Lincoln and Grant and McKinley.

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