

CHINA'S FINAL BLOW TO OPIUM

“THE CURSE OF CENTURIES will soon vanish from China,” says the *Peking Gazette*, which tells us that after March 31 the opium traffic must cease absolutely. Up to the present time opium could be imported into China from India under a treaty with Great Britain signed in 1911, and this traffic was the monopoly of the Shanghai Opium Combine. The *Clark University Journal of Race Development* discusses the question at some length, and says:

“Anticipating the end of the opium connection with Great Britain, the Chinese Government recently communicated with the British Minister in Peking, requesting that a British envoy be deputed to China to head an investigation into the opium-suppression campaign in China. At the same time circulars were sent to all the provinces preparing them for the impending complete extirpation of the traffic as follows: (1) All the opium plantations in the land were ordered to be swept away during a period of three months from September to November, 1916; (2) the trading in opium had to be entirely stopt between December, 1916, and March, 1917; (3) smoking of opium is to cease in a period of three months from March to June, 1917.”

It would seem that these provisions are received with popular favor, for *The Journal* proceeds:

“Bonfires have been frequent since these orders went into effect, the Chihli Opium Prohibition Bureau, at Kalgan, making perhaps one of the most spectacular affairs. A large quantity of opium was gathered together with all the opium-smoking instruments the officials could lay their hands on, invitations were issued, and a delegate from the National Opium Prohibition Union was requested to come as a witness. The acting president, Mr. An Ming, responded, and the ceremony proceeded in due and thorough order, lasting from eight in the morning to one in the afternoon, with the civil governor of Chihli, the military governor of Kalgan, the police authorities, and citizens from all neighboring sections an enthusiastic audience. This is typical of scenes being enacted in many parts of China.”

Big Business, however, did not surrender without a final struggle, and we read:

“The Shanghai Opium Combine is the only legal surviving distributor of opium, having secured a license to carry on its

traffic until March 31, 1917, in the provinces of Kwangtung, Kiangsu, and Kiangsi. To their bribe of \$16,000,000 for the privilege of an extension, to their threat of withholding their extra duty of \$1,750 per case, the Chinese Government has lent a deaf ear. The opium traffic must go, and as quickly as possible. The threat of the Combine to stop the payment of the additional duty, even if it is carried out—which is unlikely—would only mean a loss to the Government of something like \$5,000,000. According to trustworthy information, the Combine can sell between October, 1916, and the 31st of March, 1917, three thousand cases at a valuation of \$5,000 per case, which would give the Government a revenue of \$5,000,000, a small sacrifice where the physical and moral welfare of the country are at stake. And President Li and his Cabinet have lost no time in declaring that there shall be no compromise.”

CHINA WAKING UP—The upheaval of the Monarchy has meant more than a political change in China, says the *Peking correspondent of the Shanghai North China Daily News*; he describes it, indeed, as being also an entire revolution of the mental attitude of the Celestial, and he writes:

“The President’s visit to Paotingfu yesterday is suggestive of the process of development slowly but surely taking place in China. A thousand students graduated at the Military Academy in the old capital of Chihli, and the President went one hundred miles by train to attend the graduating exercises, leaving at 9 A.M. and returning at 4 P.M. Therein are contained three facts, remarkable because they are indicative of a state of things inconceivable in China a generation ago.

“The least significant fact is that it is possible to journey a hundred miles from Peking into the interior, to do solid business at one’s destination, and to return to the capital, all within a few hours.

“Next comes the fact that one thousand young Chinese of the better classes have just completed a military education of a modern character, fitting them for commissioned rank.

“Thirdly, the Ruler of the State calmly walks in and out of his palace, drives along streets in his motor, brushes through crowds at railway stations, makes a popular address to a crowd of lads, and all the time is doing what everybody thinks natural and proper.

“Truly, the times are changing. This trip of the President is indicative of nothing less than a revolution of thought in the mind of China, a revolution of which the possibilities are equally endless and encouraging.”