

the Chinese had to fight the French in Tonquin, they were obliged to send out to the farms and villages, offering men who would fight rather higher wages than they would get in ordinary civil life. In this way the generals of a district would raise a certain number of men, say a couple of thousand. These would be sent off to the war under four colonels, who would receive from government the pay for each man. But the colonels had to feather their nests, so they would give a certain number of men a premium to go off home again, and then they (the colonels) would go on drawing the pay of the absentees from government, and put it all into their own pockets. Thus, out of the two thousand who were originally sent off, probably about one thousand only would reach the seat of war, while the colonels would pocket the pay of the other thousand. So there were not half the number of troops in Tonquin that were reported to have been there.

Then the numbers of the French troops which Chinese generals reported to Peking as having been opposed to them is marvellous. I had an opportunity once of reading, side by side, the despatches of the Chinese commander (published in the *Peking Gazette*) and the despatches of the French general (published by the French Government) about the same battles. It was most instructive reading. The Chinese reported to the emperor, and the emperor, I suppose, solemnly believed, that the French had from ten to twenty times the number they really had; and the slaughter these gallant Chinese soldiers effected beats everything previously recorded in history. According to the *Peking Gazette*, no less than 1,800,000 Frenchmen were actually killed in the Tonquin war; and, according to the same authority, Admiral Courbet was killed on forty-six separate occasions.

While our preparations were in progress, Mr. Clarke and I took many walks through Kwei-hwa-cheng. It is a curious town and seems to have outgrown itself on two separate