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EMPIRES AND EMPERORS OF RUSSIA, CHINA, KOREA, AND JAPAN

NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS BY MONSIGNOR

COUNT VAY DE VAYA AND LUSKOD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK
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1906

Monsignor
The Count Vay de Vaya and Luskod.

PREFACE

As the name of the author of this book may not be so well known to some English readers as it is on the Continent, I have, at his request, undertaken to write a few lines of introduction and preface. [Page v]

Count Vay de Vaya and Luskod is a member of one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Hungary. Ever since his ancestor took part with King Stephen in the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom, nine hundred years ago, the members of his family, in succeeding generations, have been eminent in the service of that state.

The Count studied at various European universities, and was destined for the diplomatic service, but early in life he decided to take Holy Orders and devote himself to the work of the Church.

In this capacity he attended the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 as one of the envoys of Pope Leo XIII.

The chief enterprise of his life, however, has been to study the work of the Roman Catholic Church in all parts of the world—her missions, charitable institutions, schools, and organizations of all kinds. [vi]

Few men have travelled so far and into such remote quarters as the Count Vay de Vaya has, with this object. His position has secured for him access to the leading and most accomplished circles wherever he has been, and his linguistic attainments, as well as his wide personal experience of men and affairs in every quarter of the globe, give him an almost unique opportunity of describing and commenting on the countries which he has visited—their people, rulers, and institutions.

Seldom has any region been subjected to such complete and revolutionary changes as have the countries which he describes in the following pages.

Russia has been compelled to relax that grip on the Far East which seemed to be permanently tightening and closing: at home she has been subjected to a social upheaval which at one time threatened the existing form of government and the throne itself. And for the first time we have witnessed the triumph of an Asiatic race over one of the leading Powers of Europe.

The substance of this volume was written in 1902 and the following year, before any of these events had occurred, or were dreamed of, and this may [vii]

cause some of the details of the record to be a little out of date historically; but the change, far from diminishing, has, on the whole, probably increased its value to all thoughtful readers.

A few passages of comment and forecast have been added since the occurrence of the war, but in the main the narrative remains as it was originally written.

Japan, Korea, Manchuria, and the Siberian Railway have been described over and over again, both during and since the war, but descriptions of them on the eve of the outbreak may come with some freshness and enable readers to compare what was yesterday with what is today.

And what has been changed in the "Unchanging East" bears but a very small proportion to what remains the same in spite of wars and revolutions.

I hope, therefore, that these first impressions of countries which, in name at any rate, are far more familiar to the British public than they were four or five years ago, may prove of great interest to many readers in England and America.

The chapters on *The Tsar of all the Russias*, *The Reception at the Summer Palace*, *The Audience of the Emperor of Korea*, and *The Mikado and the Empress*, appeared in "Pearson's Magazine," and thanks are due to the Editor for kind permission to reprint them. The chapters on *Manchuria under Russian Rule* first appeared in the "Revue des deux Mondes," and those on *Japan and China in the Twentieth Century* in the "Deutsche Rundschau," but none of these have been translated into English before. The whole has been carefully revised, and considerable additions have been made. [viii]

JOHN MURRAY.

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INTRODUCTION

During my prolonged stay in the Far East, I promised to send home notes whenever I came across anything interesting, or whenever I had time to do so. This is how it happened that the story of my visits to the different cities of interest, of receptions graciously granted by the various Emperors of Eastern Asia, and the chief impressions received when crossing their empires, came to be jotted down. [xvii]

Naturally in these pages, written often under considerable pressure and in spare moments, I was at the mercy of circumstances, and could not dwell on all the points at such length as I should have liked to do. In short, in these narratives, destined to be confided to couriers and post offices, I was compelled to leave out much that might have been more sensational.

Some of the papers have already appeared in periodicals, and the appreciation that has kindly been shown to them, and the favourable criticism they have received, have been due to the sincerity and the absolute lack of pretension with which I have tried to treat the different subjects.

My intention was simply to note what was striking at the moment and what impressed me most vividly. I have tried to be as objective as possible, and to deal with things as they are, not as I could have wished to find them. Even in the most attractive books that have dealt with these far-off countries, there has sometimes been a tendency to adopt the tone of a mentor and to judge everything from a superior standpoint, as if the complete difference between those remote lands and peoples and our own had been forgotten, and as if the Westerner wished to ignore a civilization which, though different from, is not less serious than his own; in short, as though this mysterious Far East, with its almost incomprehensible masses, did not possess anything at all of a higher nature and lacked a mind altogether. [xviii]

Certainly it is difficult, almost impossible, for an alien to perceive their inner qualities and mental powers; at the same time we shall have opportunities in our everyday lives of noting explanatory manifestations. It is from living in the

same atmosphere and from continual intercourse with all classes, high and low, that it will be given us to understand a little of what is called the soul of a land and its inhabitants.

Thus, while describing events in their simplicity, we may succeed in giving something of the local atmosphere too. This is the reason why we always read [xix] with pleasure memoirs of past generations or correspondences from far-away countries or of days gone by; and why all the best descriptions in books dealing with the Far East are those unassuming and faded letters from merchants or missionaries; and why the narrative of Marco Polo, with all its *naïveté*, will remain for all ages a standard work.

Strange adventures, depicted in brilliant hues and by an exaggerated imagination, seldom help our general knowledge. Instead of adding to what we see and encumbering real facts with more or less imaginary occurrences, it is more useful to omit unnecessary details, just as the important thing in painting a landscape is to know what to leave out, so as to make the general character of the scenery clearer. This it is that constitutes the difference between the very best photograph or chromo-lithograph and a rough artistic study or water-colour sketch. In short, one ought to strive to treat this land as its painters do their sketches, always bearing in mind their design of giving in a masterly manner general impressions more than worthless details, so as to get hold of something more than can be seen—something of abstract value in the life they are endeavouring to render.

It was life with its everyday occupations that brought me into contact with all social phases, and rendered my journey and stay of interest, and made it [xx] possible for me to see the country and people in a stronger light than if I had been an ordinary traveller. I was investigating the civilizing, charitable, and spiritual work carried on by the Catholic Church under different conditions, amongst various races. These matters I have dealt with in another volume; but even the subjects that I treated of in those unassuming pages may have acquired a certain local colour, as having been seen by one who had interests and ties with the places he wrote from, and the people he lived amongst.

During the year I passed in the countries bordering on the Yellow Sea, I had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the greater number of those eminent persons whose names have lately been so often in the mouths of all the world. It was most interesting to listen to them and to hear their views. Though there may have been great diversity in their opinions, they were none the less instructive for that.

My departure from St. Petersburg presented the first glimpse into Orientalism. The splendour of the Imperial City, and the patriarchal condition of the lower classes, gave it a different character from the usual European capitals, and the network of interests in the metropolis differs even more. I had to stay rather longer than I had expected, and this prolongation gave me the best chance of making the amplest preparations, and acquiring the [xxi] necessary preliminary knowledge for my journey across the empire.

Moreover, since as an ecclesiastic I had to obtain special permission even to get to Russia, it was therefore natural that I should have expected to find the greatest difficulties and complications thrown in the way of the accomplishment of my future journey.

Thanks to the kindness of the Tsar himself, however, all possible obstacles were smoothed over. He was personally acquainted with the journey that awaited me, but with this difference, that he made it before the railway was completed, and travelled by post. It was interesting to listen to the narrative of the sovereign, giving his impressions of the remotest portions of his empire, where he could not but come into contact with all classes of his subjects, and where he was obliged to share the vicissitudes of "inflexible circumstance," as we so often read in official *ukases*.

His Majesty evidently took the liveliest interest in everything he saw, and gave charming accounts of his personal experiences. As in all royal tours, everything was naturally shown to him in as favourable a light as possible, and yet, apparently, the shadows had not altogether escaped his observation. Being heir to all this enormous territory, he probably traversed it full of hope [xxii] of being able one day to ameliorate the general condition of his country, and to prove a true and loving "Little Father" to his folk. It is indeed a melancholy reflection that those who are generally supposed to be blindly obeyed, to have all their wishes accomplished, and whose will is imagined to be absolutely autocratic, are those who are most tied by the *force majeur*.

The little hermitage of Alexandrovsky, nestling in pine woods, with its home-like character, stands, like an oasis, in the midst of Peterhof, that town of palaces and splendour. The simplicity of the Imperial family is in striking

contrast with the luxury of the so-called Court circle. All that one hears of the ostentation and extravagance of Russian Court life entirely disappears when one comes to know the home of the Tsar and Tsaritsa.

Elsewhere there is undoubtedly much pomp and glitter, for the luxury and lavishness of Russian officialism is too well known to need mention here. Indeed, there is hardly a country where things are done more elaborately, and the Exchequer seems to be inexhaustible. If the administration leaves much to be desired and cannot be criticized too severely, we must allow that the officials themselves are the most accomplished men we could wish to know. Whether an official be a minister of State, with all the polish of the old régime [xxiii] of the eighteenth century, or a simple *tchinovnik*, a tram conductor or a railway guard, it is equally pleasant to have dealings with him.

A stay of a few weeks in St. Petersburg, filled with receptions at the residences of the various members of the Imperial family, calls at the Embassies, official visits, sight-seeing, and business of all sorts, certainly gives one ample opportunity to gain a better insight into local matters than the study of whole volumes.

It was on the eve of the war that I was there. The atmosphere was full of gunpowder, and yet nobody seemed to believe that such a thing could happen; or, even if it really came to pass, that it could have greater consequences than the annihilation of that far-away island folk, of whom the Russian world seemed to know very little. For just as they are so well informed and interested in Western affairs, that one might fancy oneself in a suburb of Paris, so they are supremely indifferent to, and have very hazy ideas of what they call the "Barbarous East."

Such was public opinion and such the tone adopted by the newspapers. M. de Witte was the only man who seemed to be of another conviction. He was just then on his way back from Port Arthur and Dalny. He had been on the spot and realized the situation. He had planned and built Dalny with a view to [xxiv] having a great commercial stronghold to command the Far East, in opposition to his neighbour, Kuropatkin, who commanded the fortifications of Port Arthur. He believed that the best foundation for Russia's supremacy lay in industrial development; Kuropatkin trusted in the sword. Witte was dismissed —the rest we know.

Moscow, my next stoppage, revealed another side of the empire. The holy Moscow, the Mother of Cities, exhibited other features of interest illustrative of the mystical Slavonic soul. The Kremlin, with its gilt cupolas, is not only a monument unique of its kind, but also the expression of a nation's sentiment.

The history of the past, the aspirations of the future, are equally manifested. The glory of arms, of arts, of thought, is expressed in this Valhalla. It is the embodiment of the word "Muscovite," which means all that is characteristic of Russia. Light and shadow, brightness and gloom, virtues and vices, are equally perceptible in this marvellous city, and what is not visible is even more impressive.

All the transcendental tendencies, the shadowy mysticism, peculiar to this strange population, all that is abstract, finds new and unexpected expression within these venerable walls. Patriotism and anarchy, faith and superstition, walk side by side. Churches, shrines, and ikons are met at every corner, and [xxv] before them all, large groups are on their knees, prostrated in devotion. In this same city the most terrible crimes are committed, and the same populace that seemed so repentant and contrite, perpetrates the most cruel and bloody outrages.

In fact, Moscow is an inexhaustible field of study, and not only for historical research, but also for a more certain knowledge of this paradoxical race, full as it is of inexplicable contrasts and incessant surprises.

Siberia was another mine of contrasts and surprises, and the longer I was there the more I began to comprehend the vast possibilities of this formidable stretch of country. It is a continent in itself, with all the natural advantages to enable it to become rich and prosperous. Her future development has the same chance as that of Canada, and her wealth is even larger. To say nothing of Siberia's inexhaustible mines, the land is better watered, and the timber-forests even more extensive.

The population is still slumbering in its cradle. The life they lead is archaic in the extreme. They dwell mostly in tents, lead a nomadic life, and provide their own clothing and food themselves.

They are uneducated, but not unintelligent. In fact, after having visited different camps, I was most struck with their open expression and self-reliance. [xxvi] But it must not be forgotten that, in contradistinction to the Slavs of

Russia proper, the various tribes of the Ural-Altai race have never been serfs. They have always led a wandering, independent existence under their Hetmans.

The Baskirs and the Kirghiz are the most interesting, and are the finest specimens of Mid-Asiatic types. The Kalmuks and Ostiaks represent a more Mongolian stock. The farther we go to the East the more they resemble the Yellow race, and the Buriats and Tunguses of Trans-Baikalia are hardly to be distinguished from the Chinese.

What tremendous force is dormant in this world of Tartars! and what a shock their awakening will cause one day!

Towns like Tomsk, Omsk, Tobolsk, and particularly Irkutsk, show us the country from another side. Commercial enterprises, trade, and general progress, have taken root. They are so-called centres of civilization, but I fear that they might more fitly be called places of exploitation.

Certainly these growing towns are not wanting in praiseworthy attempts at culture, and I was especially struck by the philanthropic and charitable institutions. Unfortunately, the moral tone of this agglomerate population is deplorable, and money is spent in a reckless way.

Men, banished from their homes to such distant regions, allow themselves to be dragged down and brought to contempt, instead of trying to dominate the mass by superior character. [xxvii]

Manchuria was entirely under Russian rule in those days. The famous railway was in the hands of the Cossacks, although it ostensibly bore the name of the "Eastern Chinese Line," and barracks for Muscovite soldiers were dotted all over the country. The larger towns had quartered on them Russian officials under various designations, such as consuls, railway directors, bank managers, and so forth. Their influence and domination were uncontested, although apparently they were on the best of terms with the local officials. The Russo-Chinese Bank had branches everywhere, and evidently the least services rendered them were amply recompensed. This Asiatic method of colonization was not wanting in interest to the observer. Its demoralizing effect was very sad, and could not fail to bring retribution later on. For after all, political life, like that of individuals, has a moral code, by which any criminal actions are bound to find their punishment.

After crossing the Great Wall and staying in China proper, I still found the preponderating Muscovite influence. This was especially the case in Pekin, where the success of M. Lessar, Resident Minister, and M. Pocadiloff, Manager of the Russian Bank, was at its zenith. The influence of St. Petersburg, which had succeeded in gaining over Li Hung-Chang, was still in full swing, and Yung Lu was a not less useful partisan. He was the man of the moment, and knew how to secure, even to a greater extent than his predecessor, the sympathy and favour of the Empress Dowager. [xxviii]

The Court had only just returned from their flight. They had scarcely settled down again in that marvellous Palace which they had expected never to revisit. In fact, who could ever have imagined, after all the outrages against Christian Powers, that those Powers themselves should have brought back again the very people against whom they had fought only a few months before?

The diplomatic talent of the Dowager Empress must incontestably be of a high order. She was herself a foreigner—a simple Manchu girl. No less remarkable than her achievement in raising herself step by step to the highest pinnacle of power is the manner in which she maintains her position. The way in which she deals with her own provinces, and plays them off one against the other, is most skilful. It will therefore not be astonishing if she sometimes uses the same methods in foreign difficulties.

The victory of the Western Powers was complete, and yet, with the exception of Russia, they did not reap any apparent advantage from it. They could come to no agreement among themselves as to the partition of the spoil, and the disappointment of Japan at seeing the territory she had formerly conquered pass into the hands of her rivals, was only too justly founded. [xxix]

The situation was most interesting, the general tension being extreme. At the same time it was just this atmosphere of excitement which rendered my stay so instructive and intercourse with leading men of such great interest. Every one gained in importance at this critical moment.

Men like Prince Ching, the Foreign Minister of China and a near relative of the Emperor; his interpreter, Mr. Lee, who has such thorough knowledge of European countries; Yan-Tsi-Kai, who represents the Chinese military spirit

and believes in introducing Western methods; and Chang-Tsi-Tung, the great sage and strict disciple of Confucius—are fine specimens of the children of this vast and unknown empire.

After all, among so many interesting points in the Far East, the most interesting is man. Situations may change, war and peace, power and decadence, follow each other at intervals, but the essential characteristics of this population will remain in their main tendencies more or less the same as long as the race endures. The expressions of national sentiment that surround us, great and small, whether apparently superficial or really striking, are [xxx] human documents which must be considered with earnestness and attention, for after all it is they, more than political treatises, diplomatic achievements, or victories of armies, which will direct the natural tendencies and the relentless march of progress in and development of nations in the future. It is when observing, in all its phases, the life that surrounds us, that we can gain an approximate idea of the possibilities of the Far East.

I arrived in the Land of the Morning Calm, which might more suitably be called the Land of Continual Upheaval, when a revolution was in progress. Y-yung-Ik, Minister of Finance, was being attacked by those who sympathized with Japan. The capital was divided into two camps. Skirmishes took place in the open street. Everybody was excited, and anarchy reigned supreme.

Y-yung-Ik, whose views were favoured at the Palace, and who, on the occasion of the last riots, had saved the Emperor's life, carrying him on his back to the Russian Legation, where he remained for over a year, was in concealment in the Palace, and the mob was raging vociferously before the Imperial abode. It was a typical situation, throwing a strong light on the condition of the country.

The nation was divided into two factions. There were pro-Russians and pro- [xxxi] Japanese, but no pro-Koreans. This fine country, instead of constituting a guarantee of the peace of the Far East, was a prey to rivalry. Once suzerain of China, then under Japanese influence, during my stay she seemed to be at the mercy of the Slav.

It seemed to be the last flicker of the candle of Russian preponderance in the Far East. Their hegemony was not only apparent at Court and in the Ministries, but even began to be established all over the country. As in Manchuria, so in Korea, Russian soldiers and sailors, who were billeted on the country for various reasons, made themselves quite at home.

Between the Russians and Koreans there did not appear to be the same difference which separates Europeans from Orientals. The uncultured children of the Steppes amalgamated naturally with the native population. It was striking, particularly in Manchuria, to notice how the so-called conquerors began to be conquered in their turn by the land they occupied, which, indeed, in the long run, has always absorbed those who dreamed of dominating her, whether Mongol, Tartar, or Manchu. Probably what happened to the descendants of the famous Genghis Khan would have happened to the victorious Muscovite.

Arms cannot solve problems of a higher order. In spite of their superiority of [xxxii] military equipment, the new invaders of the Eastern Asiatic continent, the new masters of Manchuria, did not seem to be conscious of their moral duty towards their lately acquired subjects.

Instead of attempting to raise the population among whom they had settled, to a higher degree of civilization, and to inculcate nobler ideals, they were on the point of slipping down to the level of the so-called conquered barbarians.

The life and the mode of thought of the camps were low, and the moral dangers of every kind that surrounded the soldiers and officials were too great for people who, in many cases, had only a veneer of culture themselves and very little practical experience of civilizing and ennobling work, to struggle against.

After all, a state has only the right to conquer when, instead of oppressing, they strengthen and educate those weaker and more primitive than themselves. Conquest can only bear ripe fruit when it is for the general welfare.

Nations, like individuals, have their moral codes, and vocations. Nemesis must always overtake evil of every kind, and to the virtuous alone is granted the palm of final victory.

EMPIRES AND EMPERORS

I

THE TSAR AND TSARINA AT THEIR HOME OF PETERHOF

It is half-past nine in the morning, as I start on my journey to Peterhof, having been honoured by the Tsar with an invitation thither. It is yet cold and chilly. The great metropolis is covered with a veil of fog. One would imagine that winter had already begun, and it is difficult to realize that according to the calendar it is the month of August. The street leading to the Baltic station, St. Petersburg, is still half deserted.

There Switzers begin to sweep the doorways, and detachments of soldiers hurry to take up their different posts. There are a few milk-carts that rattle to and fro, and one or two private vehicles occupied by people in full dress and uniforms covered with decorations, throwing into sharp contrast the dreary surroundings of the humble suburb. In fact, contrasts are the most striking feature of the capital of the vast Russian Empire—contrasts in light and shadow, splendour and humility, and I dare say contrasts in everything that is characteristic of the West and the East. [2]

The railway station, where I arrive at last, is certainly one of the most interesting illustrations of what I have just pointed out—the very link and meeting-place of the West with the East. It is crowded with people: their countenances are so different, their dress so picturesque, their behaviour so unconventional, yet so characteristic, that I forget that I am on a railway platform, and imagine myself amidst the picturesqueness of a great caravanserai.

Perfect order is kept. The train is already at the platform, ready to start, and I am shown without delay into my compartment. There are a great many officials, all of them in striking uniforms. In fact, there are nearly as many railway employés as travellers, and together they form incoherent groups of Oriental brightness.

The train winds through colourless and uninteresting suburbs for some time. Here and there we have a glimpse of the white Neva, arched by beautiful bridges and skirted with magnificent palaces. We pass near many small villages full of summer-houses, all built of wood. Each house is painted in different colours, and has its own pretty garden. There are some red, some green, and some blue, making a polychromatic mosaic on the green fields. They are all summer residences of the official or semi-official world, who are [3] obliged to pass the summer near town. Indeed, the great charm of St. Petersburg consists in its neighbourhood. These attractive retreats, or, as they are called, *Datshas*, are on the riverside or on the seashore, or hidden in a quiet neighbourhood like the magnificent Imperial residences, Tsarskoe Selo, Pavlovsk, and Gatschina.

But among them all, Peterhof is the most famous—the Versailles of the North. I think Peterhof undoubtedly deserves the first place. There is not only splendour, but there is real beauty too. Art and nature contribute to make it one of the loveliest spots on earth. There is, in fact, only one royal residence, I think, that can compare with it, and that is the castle of Pena on the high peaks overlooking the ocean near Lisbon.

To get an idea of Peterhof we must imagine a luxuriant forest overshadowing the blue waters of the Baltic. Buried in the woods are summer-houses, gardens, fountains, Greek temples, and triumphal arches. The palace itself stands on a hill that has been cut into terraces—terraces that are surrounded by balustrades and ornamented by statues and flower-vases. Then as a centre there is a magnificent cascade looking like a crystal staircase leading up to a golden palace; it spreads out its waters into a silver carpet covering the pathway and flowing in a broad canal to the sea, bordered by an avenue of [4] rippling fountains.

And when we get tired of the golden palace, of its silver carpet and its dazzling brightness, we return to some of the smaller residences, of which there are many scattered about in the grounds. Some are little French châteaux, some others imitate Dutch farms or Roman villas. They are all different in style and taste, but they are all charming, and contain priceless collections of art. Each has interesting annals; each has some historical connexion and a past of romantic or tragic memory. Wars have been declared, treaties ratified, peace re-established in its lofty halls and gilded salons, every

one the scene of important events. Peter the Great's many schemes were born within these walls; and from these groves Catharine II ruled with her iron sceptre.

LE PALAIS ANGLAIS
"The great charm of Petersburg is its neighbourhood"
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The present Tsar selected for his home one of the smaller châteaux, called Alexandrovsky.

Alexandrovsky is indeed a modest house. It has no lofty cupolas, no magnificent gates, no stately *cour d'honneur*. It is a simple villa such as is seen in the neighbourhood of well-to-do commercial towns. It might be somewhere near Birmingham or Queenstown. It is built of bright red bricks, has some friendly bow windows, and is ornamented by some little turrets.

Its charm consists in its homeliness. Its beauty is its situation. [5]

It stands in the centre of a green lawn on the border of the sea. It is surrounded by a little flower-garden, where, instead of magnificent fountains and marble statues, there are masses of bloom full of colour and scent; borders of lilies, hollyhocks, poppies, and sweet peas form a natural fence of many hues against the sombre background of the wood. It is a garden which you can realize is tended with affection.

The Empress herself takes an interest in it, and, surrounded by her daughters, passes in this charming retreat many quiet hours of the long summer afternoons. Undoubtedly, this must remind her of lovely Wolfsgarten, hidden in the Hessian forests, where she passed the merry days of her childhood, where she returns so faithfully nearly every year, and where she is so beloved by all the villagers.

Her Majesty is tall, has a fine presence, and is extremely graceful in all her movements. She is refined in the highest degree and very artistic in her disposition. Her leisure hours are mainly occupied in drawing, painting, and music. She is an ardent supporter of all the artistic societies in the capital, and gives a great impetus to literary training in all the different schools which are under her patronage. There are a large number of these schools in St. Petersburg, and she pays personal visits to them frequently. [6]

Her greatest interest, however, is concentrated in her children, and she finds her chief happiness in her own home. Her domestic virtues are those which make her respected by the whole nation. Coming as she did from a far-away country, and being a foreigner, it must have been no easy matter to be at once understood. For refined and retiring natures it is specially difficult to become at once popular. It is only in time, and by having opportunities to show deeper qualities, that sympathy can be awakened. By kind actions, by benevolence towards those she came in contact with, and by unbounded charity, the love of the nation was secured. But how she won the hearts of all was by being an ideal mother.

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H.I.M. THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA
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The Empress is a devoted mother. She attends to her children, as much as possible, personally, and with the greatest care supervises the education of her four little daughters.

The nurseries are established entirely on the English system. There is great simplicity in the furniture, but plenty of fresh air and a good water supply.

The nursery governess is an English lady, and the rules of this little world are strictly observed and precisely carried out, Her Majesty herself having been brought up, as a grandchild of Queen Victoria, on the same principles. Method and punctuality are strictly observed, and the little Princesses must [7]
attend to their duties most scrupulously; lessons, recreation, exercises—everything is timed and planned in advance. There is a great deal to be done in the twenty-four hours, lessons and all sorts of small duties of many kinds.

The simplicity of everything might serve as a model to many households.

The food they partake of is of the plainest kind, healthy, but nothing elaborate, consisting mainly of porridge, bread and butter, milk and vegetables, and a little meat or fish. So it is with their attire; generally they are dressed in scrupulously neat white cotton, but it is devoid of all ornament. They pass many hours of the day on the seashore, and as they are running about, laughing, building castles in the sand, or clasping their beloved mother round the neck, they make a perfect picture of happiness.

I reach Peterhof at half-past ten by the special train which daily conveys the Tsar's guests and visitors. Officials, Court dignitaries, aides-de-camp, and others of those who are on duty, have hurried to the large platform, which, covered with red carpet, presents the appearance of a reception-hall. There is great animation at the Peterhof station all the time the Court is there, as the greater part of the suite live in town. [8]

Before the station is a long row of carriages belonging to the Imperial household; peculiar-shaped victorias are there, horsed by enormous black Orloff stallions with great arching necks and flowing manes and tails, looking very much as if they had stepped from one of the pictures of Wouvermans or Velasquez. Lackeys, with three-cornered hats, gaiters, and heavy scarlet coats covered with gold lace, usher each guest to his vehicle, and each starts in a different direction to the many palaces and offices. Rattling over gravelled roadways, I first fully realize that in a few moments I shall be in the presence of the mighty Tsar of all the Russias, the ruler over the greater part of the enormous Asiatic continent, the autocratic head of millions of human beings.

My request is a very modest one—simply permission to get to my destination in the Far East through Siberia. There was some difficulty at the Russian frontier about my further journey, and I was advised to get the obstacles removed by His Majesty himself. He very likely knew that I am only interested in the spiritual and philanthropic institutions established in the Far East, my desire being to get through to my objective as soon as possible.

We drive for quite a quarter of an hour through woods, and here and there as we pass by different residences meet sentries marching up and down. We [9] pass through several gates, all of them made of plain wooden bars—they might almost be in Leicestershire—each opened and closed by a Cossack. As we get nearer there are more sentries, and several times the password is given by the groom.

Alexandrovsky stands isolated in a quiet corner of the vast domain. Its home grounds are surrounded by walls and a kind of palisade. At last, having passed the last sentry and the last gate, the carriage stops at the private garden entrance.

I am received by an officer who shows me immediately into the palace—I ought to say villa. Villa indeed it is in every respect, and the entrance-hall is so small that it scarcely holds the few servants who are in attendance. The staircase is very narrow, too, and winds in exactly the same way as in small old-fashioned English houses.

The drawing-room gives the same impression of comfort and cheerfulness—the privileges of English homes. It is small, and with a rather low ceiling. The furniture is extremely plain. The few sofas and armchairs are covered with bright material, and the woodwork is lacquered white. The walls are covered with watercolours, sketches, and photographs. In one corner there stands a piano with music, and in the window a desk, apparently both much in use. [10] The main feature of this room is the quantity of flowers. Tables, brackets, and furniture, are laden with jars, vases, and bowls filled with fresh-cut, sweet-smelling flowers.

But I have no time for further observations or to analyze more minutely this bright, homely abode in all its detail, giving as it does such a good insight into the private life of its owners. Simple, bright, unassuming, it is a sincere illustration of domestic happiness; and with its writing-desk littered with papers, its piano covered with music, and tiny jars and vases full of sweet-smelling blossoms, it is a human document in itself.

The door opens and an imposing A.D.C. enters and announces that His Majesty is ready to receive me. He is one of the Grand Dukes on duty at the palace for the day. He is a first cousin of the Emperor, an officer in the Russian army, and a most accomplished linguist. He narrated to me many interesting details of his yachting tour in far-distant seas. He had just returned from India, and seemed much impressed by the beauties of that wonderful land.

A bell begins to ring, a signal that the Emperor is ready to receive me. I am shown into the next room, which is even smaller and simpler than the one which I have just left. In its extreme modesty the furniture seems to be reduced to a few chairs, a lounge, and a large writing-table which occupies [11] the greater part of the room.

This is His Majesty's study.

But if the interior is so very unassuming, the view out of the windows is simply magnificent; it looks straight on to the sea—a grey and shining mirror, crowned by the dark battlements of majestic Kronstadt. The famous citadel floats like a mirage in the blue haze of the distance, looking even finer than usual as I see it from one of the Tsar's windows.

The room is so small that there is no space to make the obligatory three bows. I have scarcely stepped into the room when His Majesty gets up and meets me himself with his well-known affability. Nicholas II wears the undress uniform of a Russian general—dark blue and green, with a very little gold

lace, and a single medal on his breast—a modest garment, subdued in colouring, suited very well in every respect to its owner.

The portraits of the Emperor are well enough known to make it unnecessary for me to go into minute details. He is not tall, and of rather delicate frame, but healthy, and with a good complexion. What strikes one at the first moment is his open and kind-hearted expression. The two main features that impressed me at the first glance are the turquoise-blue colour of his eyes and [12] their open gaze. Those eyes, which are the chief feature of his countenance, and seem to be a family inheritance, can hardly fail to arouse deep sympathy in the beholder. A very great likeness exists in this respect to the heir to the English throne.

Photo, Levinsky
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H.I.M. NICHOLAS II, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA
[To face page 12]

His Majesty seemed to be much interested in my proposed journey across Siberia, and wanted to know how long I intended to stay in those regions. He spoke in an interesting way about his own experiences; he knows the whole length of the country in fact, as Tsarevitch he turned the first sod for the railway about twelve years ago in Vladivostok, and now the line runs from one end to the other, linking two continents. But he himself has travelled over the greater part of the route in the simple Russian *tarantas*.

He gave me with great vivacity many of his innumerable reminiscences and impressions. He was interested in every question, and tried to see everything as much as possible for himself. He stopped at each place of any importance and investigated the situation in detail. Besides his official engagements, he was keenly interested in the purely historical and scientific sides of these unknown regions. The knowledge he gathered during his journey is unique in value, and of the greatest importance to students of the Asiatic races, their origin, life, and future development. Undoubtedly there has been no other [13] ruler of this enormous empire who ever before ventured to enter these remote districts.

He told me what never-failing interest it was to him to come across the different races in his Asiatic dominions, and to see the nomadic tribes there leading their own primitive life. It was a pleasure to listen, not only to his world-wide experiences, but to all his different impressions, gathered with the fresh conception of a young man, and to realize the keen interest which every sentence so eloquently expressed.

He spoke with such benevolence about his subjects, with such love about all those with whom he came in contact throughout his endless wanderings, that there should be no doubt that the Tsar of all the Russias really loves his subjects tenderly, and that their welfare is the highest aim of his life.

And he spoke further of his hopes of improving their condition, of witnessing their advancement, and of his earnest wish to have peace during his reign all over his territory. When he spoke about the great blessing of universal peace his voice vibrated with an emotion that carried the conviction, that so long as the fate of his vast empire depended entirely on his personal desire, there would be no cruel wars, but calm peace and prosperity over all his possessions. In replying I ventured to remark, "What could prevent the mighty Tsar of all the Russias carrying out his wishes?" He only answered, [14]
with a never-to-be-forgotten expression, "I see you are yet a new-comer in this country."

His Majesty showed the greatest care in making my journey through his vast empire, across Siberia, not only possible, but also in insuring that I should see as much as possible—that I should be able to observe and learn as much as would be useful to my endeavour.

His Majesty's permission was extended to embrace such hospitality as I would not have sought. I took the liberty of saying I would prefer to proceed as a humble missionary to my destination.

His Majesty kindly insisted:

"If you will not accept it for yourself, accept it for the satisfaction of your mother. She must be very anxious. I know from my own travels how hard it is for parents to be separated from their children by thousands of miles. I sent a telegram every day, but, even then, I knew what their sufferings were. It will give your mother some relief to know that while you are in this empire you are under my protection...."

* * * * *

Time seems to have flown. On my way back I write with difficulty in my solitary compartment, by the rays of a single light. My day at Peterhof has seemed to vanish as a moment, but it has been so full of interesting incidents [15]
that to look back upon it is as if a month had been crowded into a day. I have no time to go into details in my diary, so to be correct I limit myself to generalities, and if I cannot put down *in extenso* all that was of interest—I might say of importance—I want to fix the main outlines of the picture.

II

TO THE FAR EAST BY THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY [16]

I
FROM PETERSBURG TO MANCHURIA

Is it really possible to get to the Far East by land? Is the Siberian Railway open to the public? Is it comfortable? Those were the universal questions that everybody without exception addressed to me on my arrival. As for the first: yes, it is possible. With reference to the second, we must make distinctions. It is well known that to get through Russia everybody must be provided with a passport signed by the local Russian consul. It is different for priests and other church dignitaries who do not belong to the Greek denomination; these require a special permission granted by the Tsar himself. About comfort! The express trains are not only comfortable, but luxurious. In my many travels I do not remember having seen anything better fitted up, or affording to the traveller greater facilities for forgetting the long strain of the journey. The Trans-Siberian Railway is undoubtedly a marvellous piece of engineering. It [17]
may have defects, and it may need several alterations, but as a whole it deserves full admiration. Besides its commercial and strategical importance, as a mere civilizing influence it might become incalculable.

Another question which is constantly addressed to me is: Is not the journey very monotonous? Is it not a most uninteresting and flat country? Are not the

natives of a very low type? The answer to these questions depends entirely on what the wanderer is interested in. If he looks for variety and excitement, the journey may be to a certain extent uneventful. For those who are in search of Swiss scenery and Alpine grandeur, it may seem flat and colourless. As for social intercourse and pleasure, naturally, these cannot be expected. But to anybody who is interested in land and folk—I mean those whose emotions are awakened by the deeper characteristics of the different countries and their inhabitants—the journey across the Asiatic continent cannot fail to offer a series of continuous revelations. From a geographical point of view, I admit it is in part very flat, and sometimes for days the train pursues its way in an unbroken line through green pastures or the denseness of virgin forests. The people one meets at different hamlets are certainly rough-looking, children of the Steppes; but it is exactly the untouched state of those regions, and the originality of their inhabitants, that render it all of the greatest value to the [18]
student of history and folk-lore. The land may be hilly or flat; its greatest interests are not dependent upon its mere external features, and the attractive points of a race do not consist purely in the state of its advancement. They may still be very primitive, living in tents, wearing skins, leading nomadic lives, unaffected, and yet give us an insight into their characteristics and capabilities. When untouched and unaffected by outside influences, they afford even better material for psychological observation, and present us human documents of exceptional interest in regard to the possibilities of their future.

But what compensates largely for the lack of panoramic effects is the vastness of the scenery. Grand it is in every respect. Undulating steppes like the wave-beaten ocean; never-ending, densely wooded regions which seem to extend without limit. Its chief beauty—if beauty it may be called—is the sentiment. The charm of these northern regions of Asia vibrates in their atmosphere. Sentiment and atmosphere! These are the two features of that strange land which impressed me most during the endless hours I looked from the balcony of my railway car, or when I stopped at one or other of the various townships; or, again, when I was visiting some of the native encampments. Among all I noticed that was new and striking, the most [19]
surprising thing was undoubtedly the "unseen"—what one might call the moral or metaphysical sides; the impression of unseen strength, exuberant vitality, primeval power, which forces itself on the traveller indirectly again and again in endless forms and aspects. We see it in the soil and in the people. It is equally expressed in the inanimate and animate nature. We perceive it in the yet unploughed fields, and we feel it among the unawakened humanity. It is more an instinctive sensation than the absolute reality which gives us revelations as to the future of this part of the globe.

I proceeded slowly, stopping at every place of interest, and made a short halt wherever there was anything that appealed to me. And when my journey was ended, I regretted it had been so short, and I was sorry the time was too limited to permit me to penetrate deeper into the matter. But I did not fail to put down my impressions from day to day. I made a short note of everything that was interesting, new, or striking, just as it presented itself to me—just as I saw it at the moment.

At present, when the general interest towards the Far East is widening, and people seem to wish to know a little more about Asiatic nations and their different races, and when every year will see more travellers and students trying to make the link between West and East stronger, I hope a few extracts [20]
from my diary may strengthen their wish, and help them to realize and put their intentions into execution. There are great openings for activity, and scope for intelligence; and there is a great deal to be done from commercial, scientific, and humanitarian points of view, for the benefit of the whole civilized world and the greater glory of the Almighty.

II
FROM PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW

The Tsar very kindly consented to all the concessions necessary to traverse his extensive empire, and, after my leave-taking, an official brought me all the requisite papers, which had been signed by the Minister of Railways. What an interesting man Prince Chilkoff is! and such an enthusiast too! He lives literally in the midst of his locomotives, rails, and sleepers. I think his favourite abode is the extensive railway workshops of the metropolis. Looking at him, you would think he was born in Chicago; he speaks perfect English, but with a slight American intonation. He is American moreover in his keen sense of business and boundless energy. To hear him talk about the land, new [21]
tracks, almost impracticable tunnels, and steel bridges crossing the large rivers, is like a most descriptive geographical lecture; and when he starts on his favourite theories on locomotives, boilers, and pumps, one regrets not

knowing more about the mysteries and fascinations of mechanics.

Prince Chilkoff[1] went through a very thorough mechanical training, and has been studying the matter in the United States for many years. He worked there himself, and got initiated into all the secrets of railway communication. He returned finally to his own country, where he hoped to devote his knowledge and qualifications to the benefit of his countrymen. But every post of any importance seemed to be occupied. I hear he was told there was only a subordinate vacancy in the mechanical department. "Give it to me," was his answer, and he is today Minister of all the Russian State Railways, and controller of nearly 25,000 miles of railway and other means of communication.

[1] It is needless to add that since this was written Prince Chilkoff has earned a world-wide reputation by his management of the railway transport during the Russo-Japanese war.

His study is a large room in the Ministry of Railways, which is a country-like residence, standing in extensive grounds. In the centre of his famous office are two large tables, covered, as are also the walls, with books, plans, and [22]
railway charts; and as he kindly explains the route I shall take, he gets up and points it out on a geographical map opposite his writing-table. What an enormous territory this Asiatic continent is! I look at it with a kind of amazement and a sort of fear. Shall I really get across it in a comfortable railway carriage, as you would go on a trip into the country? My host seems to divine my thoughts, and with a smile assures me that from one end to another the line is entirely under the same central management, and a telegraph apparatus from the head office brings him unbroken news throughout the entire length. "I quite understand it might seem strange and unusual to other countries, but you must not forget our tendencies and our force consist in centralization." He has made the Siberian journey again and again, and gives me most valuable information respecting what to see, and where to stop, and what is really of interest. It is a grand work, and, considering the space of time in which it was achieved, and its extent, it seems nearly incredible. Including the branch lines, the Siberian Railway is over ten thousand kilometres long, and its construction was begun only twelve years ago. Prince Chilkoff has, moreover, under his management, 10,400 post offices, and over 100,000 miles of telegraph line.

I leave his house charged with valuable hints and a packet of letters and [23]
recommendations; and Prince Chilkoff, with a cordial hand-shake, repeats, "Good luck! and don't forget to let me know if anything should prove unsatisfactory."

My last day at St. Petersburg is even more crowded than the rest of the week has been. Calls of farewell, final preparations, leaving cards and inscribing my name in visiting-books, occupy the greater part of it. But this going to and fro gives me opportunity of seeing it again from end to end in all its immensity before I leave. What an extraordinary idea to build a town in the midst of a marsh! to dig canals where one cannot build roads, and to be surrounded with a plain as flat as a table. Peter the Great must have been very much impressed by Amsterdam! There are corners in St. Petersburg drenched and misty as on the borders of the Zuyder Zee. But if it has reminiscences of quiet, home-like Holland, again there are brilliant thoroughfares like a Parisian boulevard. The Nevsky Prospect, in its bustle and traffic, full of colour and of life, is unique. Nevsky is the main artery of the capital—palaces belonging to the Imperial family and the grandees, public buildings, bazaars, workshops, and every edifice you can think of. And each is of different style, each of different height, and each is painted in a different hue of the rainbow. Its main feature—I dare say attraction—is its [24]
incoherence.

During this last week the Russian metropolis presented itself to me from a thousand different sides, and in how many different lights too! Trying to remember them all before I depart for good, I do so with preference for what was pleasant, instructive, and good. Besides, I do not come to criticize, I merely come to pass through, and so I prefer to put down in my diary what might prove instructive. I fully understand the great attraction which St. Petersburg always has for foreigners. I admit it also, though I should not choose it for my residence or for my sphere of labour. The polish is perfect, and of course, if one does not belong to a country, as a passing visitor one scarcely requires more. The conditions of life—at least, for the well-to-do—are most agreeable; manners all that can be desired; refinement exquisite. I do not think you can come in contact anywhere with better informed and more richly equipped people than here. Some of the scientific institutions, like the Naval Academy and the Public Library, are quite remarkable; and the new Polytechnic School—a regular town in itself, with its five faculties and its laboratories—stands alone. Then the museums and galleries contain the most

celebrated art treasures. The famous Hermitage, large as it is, can scarcely hold them all. Antiques, gems, jewels, weapons, vases, engravings, and [25] pictures, all of the first order; and I must say they appreciate what they do possess, and the arrangements of the museums are excellent. Unquestionably there is a highly intellectual current, or, if you would prefer to call it so, undercurrent, which comes to brilliant manifestations here and there; sometimes most unexpectedly, amid squalor and débris.

The huge electric globes cast a cold and glaring light over the gloomy square in front of the Moscow station. A dense crowd invades passages, halls, and waiting-rooms, and, like the swelling tide, groans, surges, and finally overflows the platforms. Travelling in Russia has a different meaning altogether from that which it possesses elsewhere—it really means a removal: a regular déplacement. Then, people seem to leave for ever: all their belongings appear to follow them, so enormous and so diverse is their kit. From simple boxes and knapsacks to kitchen utensils and even furniture, it embraces everything one could desire in one's own abode. And afterwards, when they take leave, their shaking of hands, embracing, and tears, give the impression that they never are to meet again. And this is only the local train, taking me as far as Moscow. What will it be there, at the Siberian terminus?

The journey lasts only one night, across the famous wheat-growing plains, [26] and to-morrow, in the early hours of the morn, I hope to reach the ancient capital of the Tsars. I want to break my journey to see the ancient metropolis of the mighty rulers, to revisit all the famous scenes where so many important chapters of eastern history were once displayed to view. I want to see again the towering Kremlin, with its mosaic basilicas and treasure-houses, slumbering at present in quiet dreams of the past under their golden domes. And I want to get prepared and acclimatized to a certain extent for Siberia; for Moscow belongs altogether to the other continent; it is really the capital of Asia.

III
THROUGH EUROPEAN RUSSIA

The fading disc of the sinking sun disappears slowly beneath the horizon of the waving corn-fields. The first day of the journey is over. It was uneventful, calm, but it has not lacked interest. We have ploughed through endless fields of rich land, with a peaceful agricultural aspect. Here and there a few scattered villages of dark mud huts, and large white churches. Sometimes there is a country seat of some landed gentleman, buildings which remind me very much of an Indian bungalow. They are very long and of only one storey [27] high, half hidden by ancient trees. On the high roads peasants are just returning in endless streams, with carts and kettles, from their daily work. However far off they may have been working, they always return home for the night, for Russian peasants seldom live on their farms. The whole picture speaks of such perfect peace: the slowly moving and singing workmen, and the little villages bathed in the afterglow, express such simple happiness, that I can scarcely realize that some of those very districts have been the scene of violence and cruel outrages. It is indeed difficult to believe the reports of the latest troubles and dissatisfaction which have burst forth in the midst of the quietest of mujiks. How difficult it is to understand the inner feelings of these quaint folk! Sleepy as they may look, uncultured, and a couple of centuries behind the rest of the world, they can yet occasionally awaken; and when they awake, their passions burst out like as a stream of lava without restraint.

During the day we stop at many smaller and larger places, nearly all insignificant, and generally very far from the station—sometimes so far that I can scarcely understand the reason of our stopping. For miles and miles around there is no human habitation, and we wonder by whose hands all [28] those fields are worked. The most important township seemed to be Marsanka. It is a typical Russian country town, with its wooden houses, each surrounded by a flower-garden, and each garden fenced by lattice-work. The houses and gates are all painted in bright colours. A river encloses the entire place like a loop, and beyond the river are low-lying hills. The main feature of the place is given by innumerable windmills, of all sizes and of every imaginable construction—all equally conspicuous, equally high, and equally equipped with gigantic sails. They all whirl—they all work as if they would never stop. I do not think I ever saw so many windmills within view at one time; I counted more than a hundred. What a fertile country it must be, to keep so many busy!

MARSANKA
After a Water Colour Drawing by the Author
"The main feature of the place is given by innumerable windmills"
[To face page 28]

It is night as we arrive at Pienza, and we can see nothing except the railway station; but, as I hear, this is the main sight of the place. A fine building, though constructed of wood. I must also add that the stations all along the line are fine and convenient. They are well kept, a great many have restaurants, abundantly stocked, with richly laid out tables, and fair attendance. Prices are high, but this is to be expected, considering the distance from which they sometimes procure their provisions. Here at Pienza I find even luxury. Grapes and peaches from the Crimea, wine from Germany [29]
and France, and all kinds of American and English conserves; and, as ornamentation, fine old French candelabra, derived probably from some ruined noble's residence.

The station is animated. A great many officers and a great many officials, all dressed in uniform. Some are travellers, some have just come from the town for mere amusement. The great express has not yet lost its novelty, and twice a week is the object of universal admiration. Our train consists of two first-class and three second-class carriages, a dining-car, luggage-van, tender, and engine. A long corridor leads from one end to the other, and affords a convenient walk for daily exercise. The compartments are nicely fitted up; the one I occupy, a so-called saloon, affords me a comfortable home during the journey. The dining-car is fitted up in American style; and, as I see, all the seats are taken from morning till night. To my fellow-passengers their meals seem to be their only occupation, for if the train stops, and there is a restaurant, they alight and commence each time a fresh meal. Indeed, my fellow-passengers are great eaters and great talkers; they seem to speak about everything with the same ease and unreserve. Especially when they start on their own countrymen and government, there is no end to their sarcasm and witty remarks. To any one liking to hear about the local [30]
conditions, the Siberian journey gives an exceptional opportunity. People soon become acquainted, and if so they are delighted to find somebody to whom to grumble. Before twenty-four hours had passed I learnt more about the corn-fields and little villages we skirted; about Russian agricultural and industrial aspirations; about agrarian Plehve and M. de Witte's commercial enterprises than I ever should have expected.

SAMARA
"I shall make a short stay at Samara"
[To face page 30]

It seems that Russia is at present passing through a serious crisis which affects everybody, rich and poor—especially the latter. The conditions of the peasantry are often very hard, though the reports we read are generally exaggerated. Education and moral training might do a great deal to lift them out of their stagnant state, to inspire self-reliance, and awaken sound ambitions; but this is exactly what appears to be lacking, and where so much good could be done. And the people deserve education, for these Russian peasants, as a whole, are a fine stock—strong and healthy, easy to lead, and not difficult to improve. Even more, they have generally an unspoilt heart, and are capable of gratitude. What I hear unanimously abused is the local administration. If I were to believe half what I heard about the unworthiness of the official employés, their untruthfulness and bribery, it would be bad [31] enough, and would easily explain the reason of the continuous outbreaks. The antagonism between the so-called Progressives and Conservatives is becoming more intolerant, and strivings for reform on a smaller or larger scale seem to be universal. Some are hopeful, some pessimistic; some see Russia's future secured on the same old patriarchal and primitive foundations, others believe in commercial prosperity, trade, and advance. It is a great problem, and it is equally interesting to listen to the advocate of one or other theory. Yet I am afraid that in their sanguine anticipations they are equally far from what will prove to be the reality.

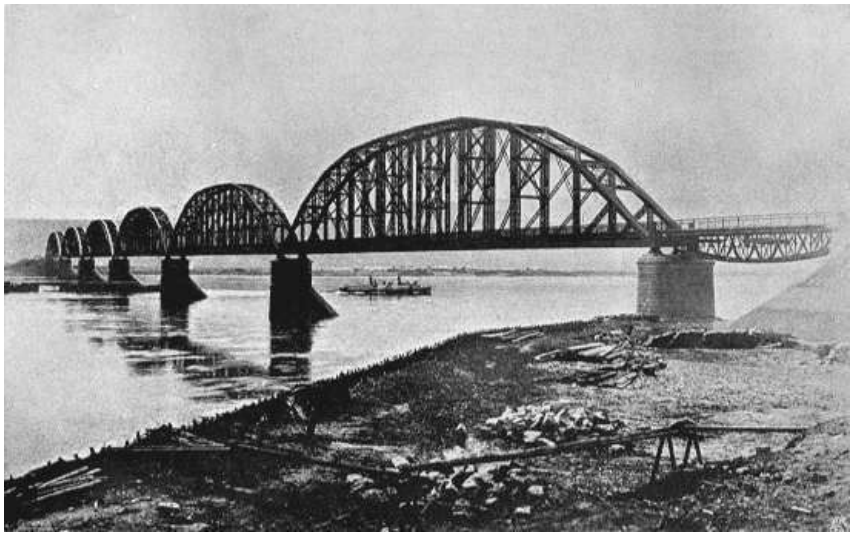
All the talk I listen to serves as a description of, or comment on, the uninterrupted panorama which unfolds itself without ceasing before us as we glide swiftly along. It is a kind of prologue to the epic of this land which we shall soon leave altogether.

To-morrow we shall cross the Volga by the famous steel bridge of nearly a mile. I shall make a short stay at Samara, and shall visit its well-known orphanages, asylums, and other charitable establishments which the town is so proud of; and, somewhat farther towards the east, the train will wind along the Ural Mountains to Siberia.

IV
WESTERN SIBERIA [32]

At half-past nine in the morning we cross the boundary of the two continents. We are in Asia. A kind of mysterious feeling impresses itself on my mind. New sensations infuse themselves into me. Encouraging hopes awaken, which I trust will give me endurance to carry out my work and aims.

Asia! What a field for exploration! What an unlimited area for higher aspirations! Modest as our endeavours may be, the result may prove incalculable in the future. From a commercial, civilizing, or spiritual point of view, there is an equally vast field for action.

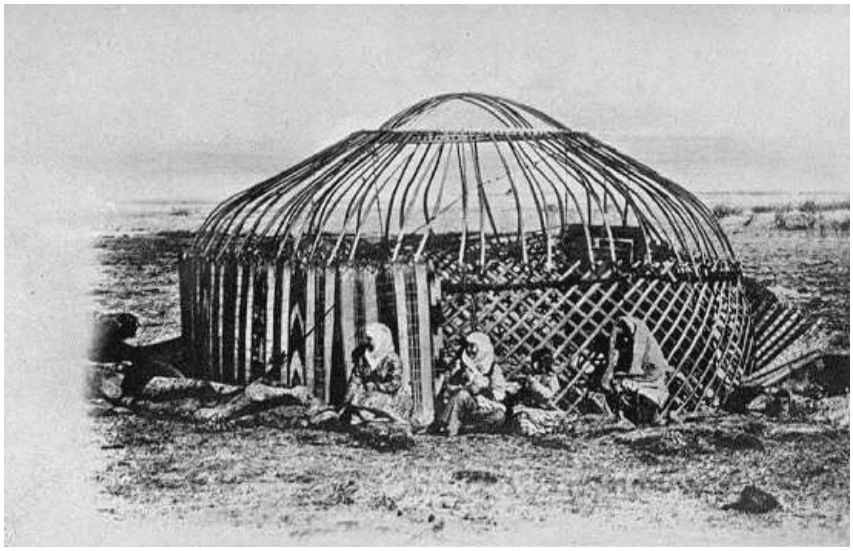


ON THE VOLGA
"The famous steel bridge of nearly a mile"
[To face page 32]

Our last day in Europe passed on the Baskir land—a high plateau, a severe and cold region, covered with rich pasture and inhabited by a semi-nomadic race of the same name. Fine people they are, of heavy countenance and magnificent frame; very conservative in their habits, very clannish in their intimacies, and even today living from preference in tents. They wear sheepskins; cover their heads, like Eskimos, with furs; and, instead of boots, roll round their feet and legs skins fastened like a classic sandal with endless straps of leather. They look uncouth, but picturesque. Their movements are [33]
unquestionably plastic. This race is one of the finest of the Tartar stock, and I am sorry to learn that they are slowly dying out.

We stop at different places, and on each platform there are many Baskirs, men and women all looking very much alike. They are bringing from their encampments milk, eggs, and poultry, to sell. I ask several of them the prices of their goods, and I am astonished at the cheapness of the market. The price of meat per pound amounts to the trifle of five kopecks; while for twenty roubles one may buy a horse, and a good one too. The soil is rich, its fertility is exceptional, and it possesses every quality for agricultural purposes. The future of the district is bound to be prosperous, and, what is more, the climate is most invigorating—raw and windy, but withal reminding me very much of the northern Scottish moors. Even the scenery, when it becomes a little more hilly, has a certain likeness to Scotland, and the same charm of solitude and melancholy. All this district impressed me very much, both from a geographical and an ethnological point of view, and by its magnitude it cannot fail to appeal to our minds.

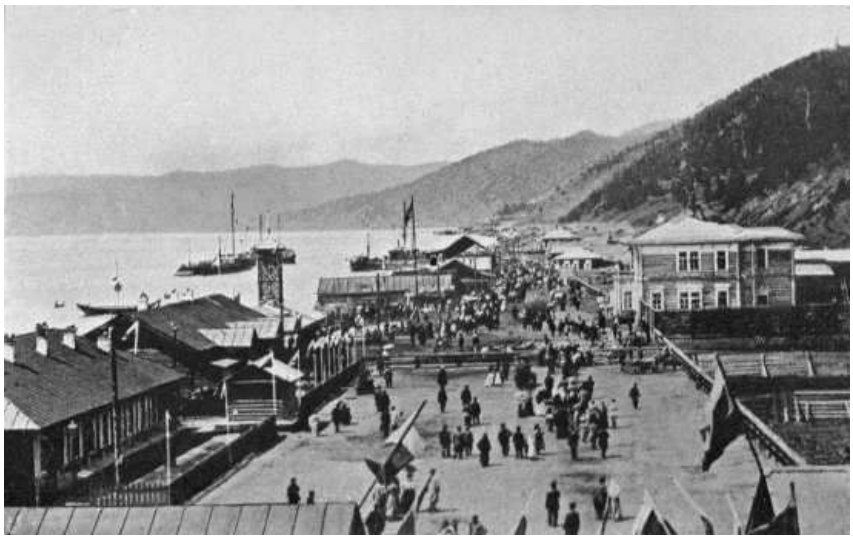
The famous Ural range, I must simply confess, did not come up to my expectations. I understand the beauty of glaciers and snow-clad peaks, barren as they may be, and I fully appreciate all the beauty of a vast plain, or the charm of a sand-covered desert; but the medium—what is neither one nor the [34]
other, neither handsome nor grand, but what so many admire and call "pretty scenery"—never appeals to me. What interested me more was the economic possibility of this long stretch of slopes. The extent of the treasures of this range is yet unknown, though there are mines which were flourishing in the eighteenth century. Suleta's shafts were sunk in 1757, and are still under the workman's tools. The mines belong largely to the Crown; they are partly worked by societies, and some are private property. The Strogonoffs and Beloselskys have all made their great wealth in these mines. Some of them seem to be inexhaustible. What is more, besides gold, silver, lead, iron, almost every mineral seems to be contained in their depths. We met a great many workmen as we stopped, apparently without any reason, on our way, winding up endless zigzags to the top of the mountain. I am rather astonished that they do not in the least look like miners. They are neither blackened by coal-dust or smoke, nor have they the gloomy expression and sad countenance of those people who are bound to work and live underground, deprived of the rays of the sun for the greater part of their lives. They look much more like farmers—people of bright disposition. I hear the wages are low; but their [35]
needs are small, so that they can easily procure all that seems necessary to their happiness. On the top of the mountain there stands a lofty granite obelisk, with a short but significant inscription. There are only two words: on one side "Europe," on the other "Asia."



SIBERIAN HOME
"Very conservative in their habits"
[To face page 34]

We are in Western Siberia, in the midst of an expanse of steppe. It seems to be boundless, and it has nothing to mark its space. It is like a sea, with all the suggestiveness of the ocean. Our train crawls like a black reptile, like a monster of a fairy tale, breathing its steam and black smoke against the cloudless sky. What a sky it is! Pale blue, cold and without a single cloud. I am afraid I must again contradict the general opinion of travellers about this corner of the earth. I have repeatedly heard travellers tell of the gloom and tediousness of the journey across it. I cannot agree with either remark. Instead of gloom, I rather think repose would be a more appropriate expression to describe its true character; and tediousness is really a question of personal disposition.

I again break my journey at several places, and always find more of interest and more new material for study than I should have dared to anticipate. Western Siberia is a marvellous territory, and it possesses all that is required to make a country flourishing. I quite understand the great interest which it arouses, and it is natural that the country should invest money lavishly for the furtherance of its progress. They have built up in a comparatively short time some important townships. Petropaulovsk, and especially Omsk, Tobolsk, and Tomsk, are already well-known centres, provided with richly endowed public institutions. The Government maintains some large schools and colleges, and does everything in its power to attract new settlers to the uninhabited regions. [36]



A SIBERIAN TOWN
"They have built up in a comparatively short time some important townships"
[To face page 36]

The colonization of Siberia is one of the most important national questions—to people thousands and thousands of square miles; to exploit all its resources; to make a country where there is now only surface and space. And the Government knows how to offer attractions. Land is granted under the most favourable conditions; there is no taxation for the first three years, seed is provided on easy terms, and, if required, agricultural implements and

machinery are sold on the instalment system. The journey is nearly free, the fare being reduced to a few kopecks per hundreds of miles. Petropaulovsk is bound to become one day the junction of Central Asia, when railway lines will run to the north along the Obi valley and south *via* Atmolinsk, to Tashkend and Bokhara. All this is well thought out, and already carefully planned. Its accomplishment seems to be a mere question of time, and, as indeed is well [37] known as an historical fact, time has never seemed to be an obstacle to the achievement of any aspiration conceived by Russia.

The long line across the vast desert area is marked at intervals by smaller or larger railway stations. For whom, and what for? one might ask, as there is nothing in sight. No town, no village, not even one human habitation. But, we are told, Government will soon build a township. It already has a name, and some of those imaginary cities even have a small Greek basilica, surmounted with glaring green cupolas. Again, some are partly finished, and their wide streets are bordered by a few wooden buildings. At the corners there are commodious shops; on the open square very likely a school; near it store-houses for wheat and temporary lodgings for settlers. It all looks so attractive from the railway station that I wonder if they do it on purpose to make it tempting.

Some of these new places do not entirely lack artistic beauty, and certainly they all have the same characteristic of appearing very national, holding firmly to the native taste and following the Muscovite style of architecture. Everything, it must be confessed, is in keeping with the surroundings, and at the same time practical and adequate to the locality. The new settler builds a [38] small house of wood, and at the same time tries to make it look neat by carving it elaborately if he can, and never fails to paint the wood in all kinds of bright colours.

V
CENTRAL SIBERIA

From unlimited pastures we pass to endless forests. For days we are surrounded by magnificent vegetation, including beautiful trees of varied hues. There are dark oaks and pale elms, copper beeches and silver birches, the colour of which is just turning. The foliage is fading, and as one pierces through their depths the leaves shake and rustle and pour down in golden showers. Beautiful this Siberian woodland is! Unknown, unpenetrated, striking in its virgin prime.

RAILWAY CHURCH SERVICE
"A rolling Greek basilica"
[To face page 38]

The railway cuts through in a straight line for hundreds of miles, and there is nothing to be seen on either side but centenarian trees and feathery ferns. What a field of exploration for a botanist! What a collection of beautiful herbs and mosses! What exquisite wild flowers! The colour of them is so deep and glorious, and the green of the grass is of the richest shade. Many of the species are scarcely known yet, and it is quite astonishing to find, in these far- [39] away regions, plants belonging to families of quite different latitudes. If the flora is so surprising, the fauna is even more so: animals of every size and of every description, from large bears to tiny squirrels. There are many kinds of quadrupeds: wolves, foxes, snow-leopards, wild goats, martens, sables, ermines, and all the innumerable members of the feline race. But what are even more interesting than the animal nature are the fossils found along the

banks of the rivers and deep in the gloom of the earth. Some magnificent specimens of antediluvian skeletons have been excavated, and these are zealously kept in the museums of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Irkutsk. And for the ornithologist it is a perfect land for research. The birds and their lives seem to have in Siberia a most interesting past, and the laws of migration offer a special field of observation. Some come from as far as Australia, while others choose for their winter home New Zealand. The theories explaining this mystery of nature are rather conflicting, and scientists have devised various explanations of these far-distant wanderings. The butterflies and beetles are unique also; in fact, it is a world in itself lost in far-away Siberia.

The long track between Tomsk and Irkutsk has the reputation of being the dreariest and the most desolate part of the journey. I did not expect to find much, which may very likely be the reason that I was so surprised to come across towns like Krasnoyark, Kanks, and Udinsk. The first, especially, is an important centre for trade and business. Besides wheat and other cereals, it is the great depot for the increasing exportation of skins, furs, tallow, grease, and lately butter. The export of butter is becoming of the greatest importance in Siberia. Farming is increasing from day to day, and the Danes accomplish a great deal in this respect. The yearly export to Europe, especially to the English market, is quite astonishing, even more so when we take into consideration that there are no winter pastures, and that all the cattle must be kept on stable food. It is easy to understand the amount of labour and care it requires, and yet it must pay, considering the number of Danish families which come yearly to settle down in Siberia. For some time Krasnoyark has been the terminus of the Western Siberian line, and it derives its present importance partly from this fact. Udinsk is growing rapidly too, and is the centre of a vast area. Around its station I saw an enormous encampment of small Russian tarantas, or cars, heavily laden with piles of sacks. Barns near the line were packed with wheat and corn; and yet these stores do not seem to remain there long, for all through the journey we constantly passed trains loaded with cereals. What will it be when all of this enormous land, the whole of Siberia, is under cultivation!

[40]

[41]

M. DE PLEHVE
Photo, Levitsky
Copyright, Nops Ltd.
[To face page 40]

It was most interesting to watch all these and many other features; to realize all that has been done already since the railway was constructed, and to conjecture the country in its full development; for nature seems to have provided it with everything. I am more and more astonished to find "dreadful Siberia" in reality as rich as, or even richer than its neighbour across the sea —the beautiful Canada.

Behind the green forest a dark blue wall seems to fence the plain in towards the south. This is the Altai range. Its length is six hundred verst, and its peaks seem to be crushed under the heavy clouds. On the other side is China. The Altai district has some of the most beautiful scenery of the whole globe. It is densely wooded, and dotted with lakes and watered by endless streams and rivers, for the largest streams of Asia flow from there to the Polar Sea. The mighty Yenisei, Lena, Obi, all have their sources among this wilderness. The Altai range was the cradle of the most ancient races, for the earliest inhabitants of the earth belonged to the same stock as the Finnish and Turanian, and prehistorical remains of them are to be found to this day. Even Herodotus mentions these early folk. Later on Mongolian hordes swept over [42]
the calm valleys, and the present populace show visible traces of the extraordinary mixture of the different races which arose in or overran this country. What great people some of them became! What extraordinary might some of them acquired! With what striking lines they have filled the pages of history! And as in those days long gone by, some of those tribes still preserve their independence and unlimited freedom. They have even kept the old name of the highest peak, and call it, as ever before, Chin-Chan, the golden mountain.

I was roused from my reflections by the clanging of the railway bell at the

Irkutsk station. At last I had arrived at the largest town, what people here call the "Paris" of Siberia. Since yesterday morning I have been travelling in the territory of the government bearing the same name, of which it is the administrative centre. The district of Irkutsk is enormous, with its five divisions of Nijni-Oudinsk, Balagansk, Kirinsk, Irkutsk, and Erbolinsk, of which each is a territory in itself. It extends south to China, and submerges north into the Arctic Ocean. Its variety equals its size. Besides the flat pasture regions, it has mountains towering up to Alpine elevations. Moonkov-Sarde is 11,430 feet high. The fertility of the soil is equalled by the richness of the mines; but this vast area contains scarcely a million people. The northern part [43] of it is entirely barren, and hardly explored at all. The present populace derive their origin from Mongolian lineage. The most numerous are the Buriats, Tungus, and Kalmuks, who lead nomadic lives, and for occupation rear their herds, hunt, and fish. They are not yet acquainted with agriculture, and when they settle by the sides of rivers and fertile districts they leave the land to be cultivated by the Slavs, and acquire their tools and requisites by the simple method of exchange. Their religion is idolatry. In the south there are a great many Buddhists, and Mohammedanism appeals especially to the Tartars.

Of all the strange folk by whom Siberia is inhabited, general curiosity seems to be most interested in the convicts, of whom, during the last century alone, more than one hundred thousand were sent into exile. Only half of them ever returned to their homes again—many died; and only a small contingent settled down after the expiration of the punishment. But all this has often been narrated and described by famous authors: sometimes in such vivid colours, depicted in all its gloom, lamented with sighs of agony, that on visiting some of the prisons and workhouses I am quite astonished to find them far above my expectations. Considering the ordinary condition of a Russian criminal, the difference between home and prison is not harder than [44] in any other country. If the officials and jailers are men with human sympathies, there is every opportunity of spending their time in a way which will lead to general improvement. Where the misery really comes in is with those who are of a higher culture and greater refinement, and who are, justly or unjustly, punished for some uproar, and who suffer merely for their convictions.

To give an adequate idea of the Irkutsk station on a foggy and rainy autumn night, at the hour when the express arrives, is simply beyond possibility. And to describe the way of getting from the station to the town is even more so. To begin with, the railway station does not look like a station in other parts of the world at all. Roads or streets cannot be seen, and a town, in our acceptation of the word, does not exist. The words seem to change and to lose their meanings there. If it had been light I should have tried to take some pictures of the desolation; but it is pitch dark, so I will confine myself for the moment to putting down a few notes—my first impressions.

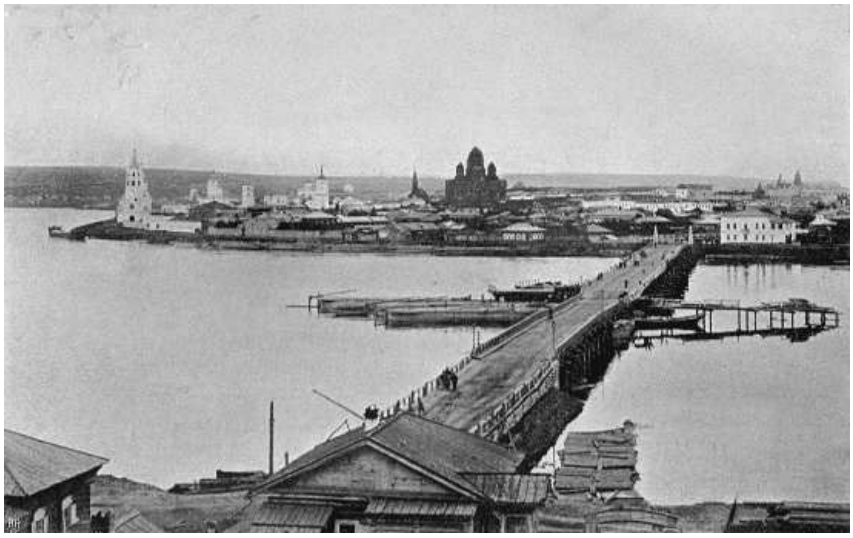
The train stops with a sudden jerk. The door of my compartment is torn open with violence, some brigand-looking men jump in, and as suddenly as they came disappear again, but alas! with all my luggage. How long it took to [45] gather and regain it altogether, I do not remember; and the extent of my walks from one end of the long platforms to the other I cannot calculate. On the chilly platform of Irkutsk station all ideas of time and space vanish completely. I think I should be seeking to the present hour if a martial-looking officer had not come to my help. His height is imposing, his gestures commanding, and his voice resounding. He uses all his enviable qualities at once, and all for the same purpose—to find my kit. He fights his way to achieve this by cutting through ground heavily barricaded by cases, sacks, travelling-bags, and furniture. He makes people stand up and clear out of his way, scolds and threatens all the porters and every mujik he comes across. And, strange as it seems to me, his efforts are crowned with success. He hands me over all my belongings! I thank him heartily for his kindness and express my sincere hope that, owing to his great strategical abilities, I may find him, if ever I return to Siberia, promoted to the rank of general. At the same time I cannot omit remarking that the general civility and kindness which were shown to me, by employés and passengers alike, were most gratifying. Everybody seemed to wish to help, to give information, and offer whatever they possessed. Their manners, from the highest to the lowest, were [46] irreproachable. I will go further, and say that on no railway have I ever met guards showing more attention and more good-nature. And much patience they require. The electric bells of the different compartments seemed to tinkle incessantly, as if the only occupation of some of the travellers was to ask what they already know, and to order what they do not require.

Whips crack, horses neigh, coachmen yell, travellers scream, porters quarrel. Such is the scene which awaits me in front of the station. I secure one of the

many small droshkies, of which there are hundreds, and all shaky and open like the public vehicles of sunny Naples. The only difference is that instead of sunbeams there is sleet falling on us from above. My belongings are put on another droshky, skilfully fitted together like an elaborate mosaic. We start in a sea of mud—dark and liquid as a sauce—which covers everything like a shiny varnish. The depths beneath must be great, for sometimes my droshky is nearly submerged, and the lava-like stream floods our small vehicle. But it seems to be built for use on land or on water, for sometimes I have a sensation of floating in a canoe, rather than rolling along on wheels. We reach terra firma in the shape of a bridge formed of logs, nailed and tied together. The bridge is long, but at last, on coming to the end of it, the driver [47] announces with pride, "We are at Irkutsk." I cannot help asking, "Where?" for I do not see any buildings or any sign of a town. It takes some time before I can distinguish in the depths of the night high palisades, looking very much like those surrounding soldiers' encampments in the Middle Ages. Above the palisades a few roofs emerge, low and sloping, very much like a tent. But at a sharp turn a brilliant electric globe spreads its beams, like those of a lighthouse at sea, to lead the wanderer to a secure harbour. Following its course, we land at the doorway of the famous Hôtel du Métropole.

For famous it is! I shall certainly not forget it, and hope never to see it again, for I think it contains all that Western bad taste and Eastern filth combined can produce. Along a passage carpeted with red Brussels and mud a waiter, in evening dress, but apparently without linen, shows me to an apartment furnished with green plush, but devoid of bedding. I am told that travellers are expected to bring their own sheets and blankets. I have none, and after some rushing about I am provided with sheets which I prefer not to use, and would rather content myself for my night's rest with an easy chair and some travelling-rugs. There is, moreover, no washstand, for the queer apparatus in the corner, bearing, apparently as an ornament, only one basin about the size [48] of a finger-bowl, cannot be so described. No hot water! And if you call for any they bring a few drops in a cream-jug. Finally, there is no air either! The windows are nailed up all the year through. On trying to open one it nearly fell to pieces. So if people nowadays ask me what hotels in Siberian towns are like, I am bound to say you have plush and gold, but no fresh air and no hot water!

VI
THE SIBERIAN METROPOLIS



IRKUTSK
"As I walk down to the Angara's banks I am short of adjectives"
[To face page 48]

How shall I record all the tumultuous impressions of the first twenty-four hours passed in Irkutsk? After the gloom of the night a brilliant morning broke forth, brilliant as it is only seen on these high plateaux. As I took my first glance round, everything seemed to swim in a blaze of light. The small log houses seemed to have grown into palaces. The palisades presented colours of hundreds of different shades. Monuments and gilded domes seemed to have arisen out of the ground. All the gloomy picture of last night vanished altogether, dispersed by the light of the sun like the melting away of a nightmare. What a magician this celestial body is! Painter, sculptor, and architect, he can construct and raise marvels out of nothing, and make us see [49] and admire where all is only glamour.

As I walk down to the Angara's banks I am short of adjectives. Language fails to describe the pureness of the atmosphere, the variety of the tints of the

distant mists, and the whole scenery of the plain with its vibrating mirages. I think it is at the early hours of the morn and at sunset that one can best realize the charm of this strange country, understand the dreamy legends which were born on the soil, realize the soul of its people, and penetrate into its wondrous atmosphere, full of enigmas and mysteries.

Irkutsk is a large and important centre, the seat of the military and civil governors, of the Catholic bishop, of the commander of the forces. There are high schools, many public institutions, and factories. Irkutsk is a famous commercial town, and is one of the most prominent markets for international trade. The high street is an endless row of shops, full of goods made in Germany, and some in America. I do not see much English merchandise; but, as I hear, English commercial interests are only represented in a few of the larger mines and building enterprises. The Siberian national museum deserves special mention. It is a fine stone building, rich in all that relates to the origin, history, and folk-lore of Siberia. A few hours passed in its halls give [50] one a most extensive insight into the conditions of the different races and tribes which have peopled these regions for centuries.

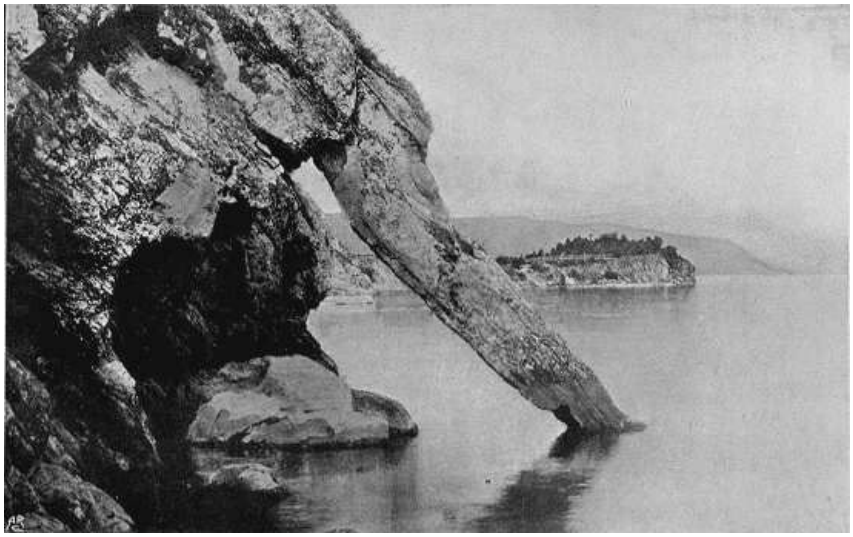
Irkutsk from a social standpoint seems to offer some advantages too. Government employés, officers, and others regard it as a special favour to get an appointment here. There is a great deal of entertainment, and in the centre of the town is a most pretentious building—the Imperial Opera House. Life is expensive, and the population shows a great tendency to luxury, and even more, what one might call waste. Money is spent easily and uselessly, as is generally the case in growing places and recent settlements. In this respect there is a slight resemblance between Irkutsk and a Western American ranch or an Australian mining town; and in the afternoon, when everybody promenades on the wooden pavements, which run like bridges across and along the muddy streets, the inhabitants show exactly the same variety of origin and of social condition as in those towns beyond the seas.

Besides Russian, I hear German spoken. Poles are numerous too, and all the different Baltic provinces have a fair number of representatives. Nearly all the trade is in their hands. Russians are not commercial people as a rule. And there is a large Chinese colony, mostly occupied with the famous overland tea trade *via* Kiahta. They walk for hours and hours up and down all these endless [51] pathways, and a great many sit, covered with furs, in front of their house doors to see the show. About eight o'clock everything becomes quiet; streets are deserted, doors are closed, shutters fastened, lights extinguished; and there are only the watchmen sauntering slowly from corner to corner, monotonously tapping their wooden rattles to let householders know that they are awake, and to give the robber at the other side of the street time to escape.

It is worth while! I should, after all, recommend travellers to stop for a few days in some of the largest Siberian towns, in spite of the rough hotels and the primitive ways; it gives such a definite idea of their buildings, inhabitants, and mode of living, as could never be procured from books.

VII
TRANS-BAIKALIA

I have arrived at the climax of the journey. We are crossing Lake Baikal. It is the most celebrated passage of the whole overland journey; the scenery is fine: an extensive sheet of water, brilliant like a mirror, surrounded by high mountains and majestic rocks; but I am inclined to repeat what I said before about hilly scenery: lake districts do not appeal to me. A sea in its greatness, [52] and a marsh in its diverse variations of colour, are both perfect in their artistic values, only different in conception. The former imposing, like a picture of Meesdag; the latter, hazy like a Corot, each perfect in its style. But a lake, even the prettiest, does not rise above the effects of a chromo-lithograph. Lake Baikal, viewed from the north, loses its banks, and so has the advantage of appearing as an ocean.



LAKE BAIKAL
"There are some enormous rocks as if thrown in by the hand of a Titan
[To face page 52]

The whole distance is flat, veiled in silver mists and pierced through here and there by the crystal peaks of the distant mountains. There are a few islands scattered about, some enormous rocks, as if thrown in by the hand of a Titan. To each a legend is attached. Each has a different fairytale. All of them, I am told, were inhabited by dwarfs and fairies, possessed of marvellous gifts, and belonging to a wondrous past. At least the mythical minds of these archaic people endowed each striking spot with a different tale, and there are many such, especially on the south-eastern shore, which displays a great variety of scenery, and this proves to be a serious hindrance to the completion of the railway track. The line around Lake Baikal is not completed yet, for there are several tunnels still to be bored and a great many rocks to be cut through; but it is, after all, the only portion of the track which offers any serious difficulty [53] to the engineer. All the rest has been easy to accomplish, and, with the exception of building the great railway bridges, consisted mainly of simply laying the rails on level ground. But although it was not difficult to construct, it might have been better done. The rails are altogether too light, and after a few years of traffic working it is already under constant repair, and will have to be altered altogether very soon, as it is so defectively ballasted.

At present the train is carried across the lake by a huge vessel built in Newcastle. In winter they sometimes use an ice-breaker, which apparently works very slowly, for generally the railway provides, for passengers and goods, sledges on which to traverse the frozen waters.

Our boat is overcrowded. Passengers of all nations and of all grades. Besides Russian officials, there are foreign tradesmen, a few Germans, one American, and a Dane, a detachment of soldiers guarding convicts, and a few settlers. And so I have an opportunity of watching the four leading classes of this new country. These are, indeed, the four different elements by which Siberia is becoming populated. I am rather impressed by the perfect cordiality with which they share the common fate in their new home. The soldiers are Cossacks, a kind of irregular troops, and enjoy perfect freedom. The [54] Government gives them a certain territory, where they go in for agriculture and raise cattle and horses, and at the same time are liable for some military service. They are fine men, excellent soldiers, and deserve their long-established fame for courage. The settlers are all of a different race, coming mostly from central and southern Russia. They are indifferent-looking, miserably clad, poor folk, with sallow faces and sad eyes. Whole families—fathers and mothers, grandparents and grandchildren—have all gone together to the far-away promised land to live and to die.

The Russian Government is very anxious to settle agriculturists in these Eastern Siberian regions, for the land is as yet barely cultivated at all. Farmers are very scarce, and the famous mines are also short of labourers. It seems that possibilities here are even greater than in Western Siberia, the only drawback being the enormous distance. Yet the journey scarcely costs anything, as I mentioned before; the fare is merely a nominal sum. It is evident that Russian railways can afford to lose; their deficits last year amounted to the sum of fourteen million roubles. But the main object of these State railways is not to make money—anyhow, not at present. They are designed to colonize this newly-acquired country, and settle Slavs among the [55] native Mongolian and Tartar tribes. And besides—and I think before and above all—there are the strategical interests to be considered. Undoubtedly the Siberian Railway is a military one, and with all its junctions and crossings

seems to have been planned with the view to forwarding troops and ammunition speedily. And even the often-discussed puzzle—why does the Siberian Railway so very frequently avoid entering the most important townships?—might be partly explained from a military standpoint. Opinions differ as to whether the railway in its present state can prove entirely satisfactory for the conveyance of large army corps. At the same time, we must not forget that it is partly under construction still, and its final completion seems to be far in the future.

The crossing of Lake Baikal takes between four and five hours. The passage is extremely rough, and squalls burst forth very unexpectedly. We arrived about sunset on the eastern shore, at a place called Myssowa, where there are a few log houses scattered about, and a rough railway station; but in the dining-room there is a table laid out in a lavish style, and, like the smallest of them on the line, it does not lack its pride—a gilt centre-piece and five-armed candelabra. We do not start again until midnight, so I have time to go for a walk, though soon return from it, for it is very dreary. There are but few [56]
buildings, and I am afraid every one is a public-house, for Myssowa, being the centre of a rich mining district, shows all the sad sides of the miners' life. The money they earn during a hard day's work is thrown away in the hours of the night. In the front of the station are a few dozen of them standing about; dismal and stolid-looking creatures, emerged from the slums of Western towns and launched in Eastern Siberia. In these far-away regions, workmen are rather well paid, and that is the reason so many remain for some time in the course of their flight.

It is snowing hard. The feathery flakes fly and skim like so many white-winged butterflies against the pale grey sky. It is bitterly cold, and the windows of my railway carriage are thickly frozen over, and when they clear there is not much to be seen. The high mountains have disappeared, and there is no majestic plain before us. The whole district is hilly, with here and there a river, and very scant vegetation. Villages seem to be unknown, and the first place of any importance we stop at is Petrovsk, a locality which owes its origin to its deep mines, enormous factories, and a large prison to furnish the workmen. What a gloomy site! Never have I seen factories and forges more desolate, and never has smoke appeared heavier and blacker to me than that [57]
which I see puffing from the numberless chimneys. It is an inferno, whose horrors only the genius of a Dante could describe. And if Petrovsk had a city gate, its sole inscription could be "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate."

And how many have entered this ghastly place! How many of the Russian and Polish nobles have been exiled here! Nariskins, Mouravievs, Anenkoffs, Volkonskys, Troubetzkois—we find descendants of all. How many historical families have had their political aspirations stranded here! The miseries of Omsk have been described by Dostoievsky, but those of Petrovsk will never be entirely known. Many of the exiles have been followed by their brave wives, ladies of marvellous courage, leaving palaces to follow their husbands and to suffer voluntary exile.

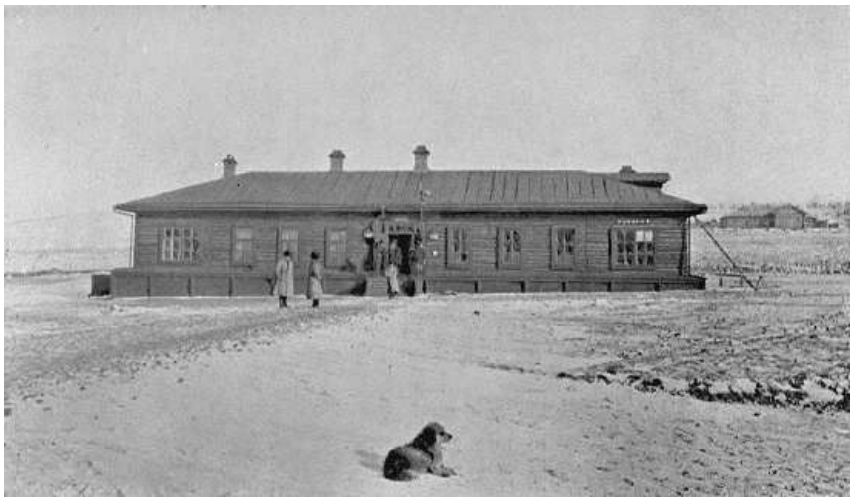
Through the frozen lands of Trans-Baikalia we continue our way. I am told the country is very rich. There are over thirty mines in work at present, and there might be a great many more. Where they have already started farming it has proved a great success, and some of the towns show signs of rising commercial activity; but I know not why this part of Siberia misses altogether the great charm, in admiration of which I was lost a few days ago. The high plateau of the Baskirs, the steppes of the Kirghiz, and the dense forests of the [58]
Kalmuks, all had a peculiar charm and atmosphere; but Trans-Baikalia, though undoubtedly possessing great economic possibilities, seems to have no beauty at all. The inhabitants are Buriats, and nomads, like the others, but lack their sympathetic features, and seem so strange—so entirely different. Their yellow, parchment-like skins and beady eyes lack all expression, or if they have any, it is so incomprehensible to us that we look at them as mere curiosities—as children belonging to another planet.

They live in tents or in huts covered with a kind of felt prepared from horsehair and furnished with skins; and breed horses, of which they possess large studs of their own. Men and women are famous riders, and live in saddles from the cradle to the grave. Men and women wear very much the same kind of garments, heavy boots and low felt hats, and leave their long hair hanging in greasy tresses. They resemble the Chinese very much, and even more so the Tibetans and Bhutanese, and profess the same religion too—for nearly all are Buddhists. Hundreds of Lamas swarm all over the country, and there are several monasteries belonging to them. The Government, which is generally hostile to any creed except the Greek Church, not only tolerates, but apparently supports their claims to a certain extent. Russia seems of late to be taking a great interest in its Buddhist subjects, of whom it possesses [59]

several hundred thousands. It even accords them every facility to make their great pilgrimages to the Lama of Lhassa, in mysterious Tibet, and by this means gets into constant communication with the forbidden land.

The last day of our journey is passed in the Amur region; that enormous district, which was granted to Russia without the drawing of a sword and without any cost, by a single stroke of the pen of Count Muraviev after the Treaty of Pekin in 1860. From Chitta the line turns to the south-east, and we are proceeding to the so-called Chinese frontier. At midnight we reach our destination, a settlement called Manchury, lost in a corner of the desert of Gobi. On the other side extends Manchuria, which I am emphatically assured belongs to the Yellow Empire. From here the railway runs under a different title. Instead of being the "Russian State," it is called the "Eastern Chinese Railway Company." It has three main branches. One runs from Siberia to Harbin, the second from Harbin to Vladivostok, the third from Harbin to Port Arthur. They unite the Yellow with the Black Sea through Moscow, and the Pacific with the Baltic through St. Petersburg. What may have appeared to be a dream only a few years ago is a reality today.

A saloon car containing a bedroom, study with verandah, servant's quarters, [60]
and a kitchen, which the Company very kindly put at my disposal, and which is to serve as my home while getting as far as Niu-chwang and Port Arthur, is now being attached to the new train, and while it is being got ready I have time to sum up recollections and arrange my papers.



THE STATION OF MANCHURY
"Lost in a corner of the desert of Gobi"
[To face page 60]

There is more to note than I expected, for I found interest in every direction and in every respect. Siberia is more than a country, it is a continent—I might even say a world of its own. It has its characteristics and special features; its own soil and its own folk; its own geography, ethnography, and climate. It is an unknown land altogether; new or old, as you like to call it. To understand it requires more instinct than erudition, more sympathy than analysis. The observer must have sentiment; and even so it may or may not appeal to him, and he may like it or not, yet he cannot fail to regard it as impressive and imposing. It is a land of nearly five million square miles, and it has eight organized provinces, of which each is larger than most of the Western kingdoms. It can be maintained and developed from its unlimited resources, and guarded by an army amounting, if required, to millions. It is grand in every respect. It is watered by the largest streams of Asia, and possesses the most extensive fresh-water lake of one hemisphere. It has a greater area of [61]
productive land than all Europe put together; its forests are hardly measurable; its mountains tower high to the sky; its reputed monotony should rather be called vastness, for variety it does not lack, only it occurs at enormous intervals.

The same distinctions prevail with regard to the inhabitants; they belong to various tribes and descend from different races. Some belong to the Tartar, some to the Mongolian, some to the Caucasian family. Some are yellow, and some are white. To-day the rulers are the latter, but it is the home of the former. Will the white remain the dominating race, or will it be overwhelmed by the yellow, or will it become amalgamated and swallowed up by the great majority? What an interesting problem, and how inexplicable! It is, indeed, hard to understand the nature of these people; to read their thoughts; to comprehend their lives; and to realize their ideals.

Once mighty, now in decay; leading a subordinate, unorganized existence, lacking energy, unfit for higher aspirations. And yet physically all these

nomads are fine creatures, possessing all the power of their forefathers of the time of Genghis Khan. How long will it take them to awaken? How long will it require to realize and acquire all the advantages of Western civilization and the elevating power of Christianity? [62]

These are questions which can only be answered by the history of the future. The best forecast, I am afraid, will fall short of what will prove to be the reality. I fear there may yet be many wars, and I hope peace too, and conferences and treaties; but racial struggles cannot be settled on battle-fields or in houses of parliament. The destiny of mankind has a higher tribunal.

Whatever may be the future of the Far East, the Siberian Railway will have undoubtedly a certain share, if not by altering, certainly by hastening its course.

It was a mighty step forward. The step of a Colossus!

III [63]

MANCHURIA UNDER RUSSIAN RULE

Am I on Chinese territory? Does Manchuria really belong to the Yellow Empire? Since I crossed the Russian frontier several days ago there has not been the slightest change that I could see. Everything has remained Russian.

Our train was in charge of Muscovite soldiers, the railway officials at the stopping places were Russian officers, the barracks around were inhabited by Cossacks. The line was guarded by Russian troops, and if the latest reports could be trusted, public safety seemed far from secured. Hardly a day passed without atrocities of some kind being reported, and skirmishes between Manchu marauders and Russian scouts were of frequent occurrence. The railway itself was constantly threatened, the banks destroyed, and the rails torn up; so even our train was provided with a military escort to defend it in case of necessity.

The "Eastern Chinese Railway Company," so called in order that there might be something Chinese at all events about the name, is an exclusively Russian enterprise, and no one disputes its entirely strategic object, which is to [64] connect Vladivostok and Port Arthur with Moscow and St. Petersburg. This became very evident to me during my journey. The line is constructed by Russian troops and military engineers under the direction of officers. It is still far from complete, and I was therefore the better able to watch the progress of this interesting undertaking. The work is carried on at great speed—thousands of coolies are employed upon it under the supervision of Cossacks. The sand is moved in wheelbarrows, sleepers are laid and rails fixed, all at one and the same time, by different gangs of workmen. The system of construction is the same as that so successfully adopted by General Annenkoff for the Trans-Caspian Railway.

I had plenty of time to give my full attention to it, for there was nothing else to see. We were crossing the north-eastern border of the Gobi desert, and if ever desert was rightly so named, it is this one. The Sahara has at least the charm of the tropics, the Arabian desert has the beauty of a cloudless sky, the desert of Bikanir possesses the golden hues of the Indian sun; but the Gobi desert has nothing to commend it; it is absolutely desolate. There is neither colour nor charm, but a leaden sky hangs over an endless expanse of grey dust—or rather, ashes—which, when whirled about in the wind, obscures [65] heaven and earth and covers everything as with a shroud. Not a village was in sight, not even a solitary dwelling. The only living creatures in this desolate region seemed to be the Russian troops and the legions of coolies working under their orders.

Before going any further I must explain that I was travelling by goods train. The line, as already said, was not finished, the rails hardly laid, and there were no proper stations; guards and officials being accommodated in temporary huts and encampments. There was no regular tariff and no tickets were issued. Trains of trucks with materials for construction plied between the main junctions, and these same trains also conveyed the workmen and the persons connected with the undertaking, to their various destinations.

It was necessary to get a special permission from the authorities to travel by this route. Of course I was prepared to rough it, and the directors had not disguised from me the fact that as yet no arrangements had been made for the convenience of passengers. They could not even promise that I should

reach Port Arthur without delay, for some of the temporary bridges had been destroyed by the autumn rains, and the railway banks in various parts were washed away by the floods. But a special car was placed at my disposal for the whole journey across Manchuria, and this semi-saloon car became my [66] domicile for several weeks.

To give some idea of my movable house, I may say that although the exterior was extremely simple, the interior was comfortable enough. It consisted of a bedroom, a study, a passage, a lavatory, and a small balcony; besides these, there were a kitchen and sleeping accommodation for my servant. The balcony was my favourite resort: many a peaceful hour have I spent there in reading or writing, and looking out upon that dismal landscape unfolding itself in its monstrous immensity.

Sometimes my home was shunted and I was left for days to amuse myself in the vicinity of some place of interest. Then it would be hooked on again behind trucks carrying bricks, iron, and all kinds of machinery. My carriage was my home, my stronghold. And indeed it was not unlike a fortified castle when it stood motionless near one of the stations, with sentries and watches patrolling round or halting in the neighbouring encampment. I was never quite sure whether they regarded me as a convict or whether they kept a kindly watch over me.

Along the route various stations were in process of building, some already roofed. Unpretentious structures they were, never more than one storey high, and roofed with black tiles. Outwardly they resemble the Chinese houses, and [67] the beams are curved in the "Ting" style. Although unfinished, they impress one as if encumbered with a weary past, rather than as having a bright future in store.

Everything, in fact, has a doleful aspect here. There are no gardens and no cultivation of any kind worth mentioning. The station yards are swamps, or pools of mud. Here and there an attempt has been made to improve matters, and stones or planks are laid down at intervals to assist the traveller in crossing.

Refreshment rooms are liberally provided on the Trans-Siberian line, and occasionally they even have some pretence to luxury; but in Manchuria they are of the most primitive description, scarcely provided with the barest necessities. A wooden table and a rough bench are the usual accommodation, and the cabbage soup or the national *kasha* made of buck-wheat is served by an amateur cook with all the air of a novice in the profession. At the junctions, where trade is somewhat brisker, one is able to get *piroshki*, which means, as it is, one of the favourite Russian dishes.

Primitive as the refreshment places are—a bare tent sometimes serving the double purpose of kitchen and dining-room, with an old kerosene-oil case for table and dresser—they are always much frequented. On the same principle as that adopted for the construction of the railway, the Russian "chefs" make [68] the Chinese coolies do all the work.

Travelling through Manchuria in this leisurely manner, I had plenty of time to obtain a thorough acquaintance with its different regions. From a geographical point of view the northern portion consists of a barren tableland; towards the south it becomes wooded, and in the vicinity of the towns the ground is fairly well cultivated.

TSI-TSI-KAR
"The capital of Northern Manchuria is Tsi-tsi-kar"

The capital of Northern Manchuria is Tsi-tsi-kar. The Governor of the province resides there, and it is the centre of that part of the country. But the town itself is very primitive, and far behind the other two chief towns, Kirin and Mukden. The population is a mixture of Manchus, Chinese, and Buriats, who do a small trade in raw materials, more especially in skins of all sorts.

From a very early date caravans have made this place one of their stopping stations on their way from the southern provinces to the districts north of the Amur. The people still use the same primitive carts as in those remote times, sometimes drawn by Mongolian ponies—I have seen as many as sixteen or eighteen to one cart—more often by oxen.

The peculiar way in which the harness was fixed always amused me: it seemed an inextricable confusion of straps and cords. How do they manage it? It is a problem which only Chinese patience can solve. [69]

I had equally good opportunities of studying the local dress and the customs of the natives. In this vast, barren region, where no European had ever penetrated before the construction of the railway, everything is still in its primitive state. The people live partly by agriculture, such as it is, and partly by fishing. The houses are extremely poor; we should call them hovels, built of bricks or dried mud. There they live, together with their cattle and other domestic animals. Like all Asiatics, they are devoted to horse-breeding, and I visited several large *haras*.

Flocks and herds abound, but the animal one meets with most frequently is the pig; but the pigs of this region are very different from ours. They are usually black, with long, thin tails, looking rather like boars. Numbers of them are to be seen in every yard, rooting up the ground and giving the Manchu homestead about as untidy and dirty an appearance as is possible to conceive.

Of poultry there is no lack either. Geese, ducks, and fowls share the family abode. The entrance to every house is guarded by half-savage dogs, like so many wolves, and certainly not less ferocious. More than once I was nearly devoured by them, and as it is not advisable to fight them I always took care to have my pockets full of biscuits. [70]

A Manchu home, in short, has the appearance of a cattle show, or a Noah's ark, and the life lived is unquestionably antediluvian.

Speaking generally, the cultural standard of the Manchus is much below the average Chinese level. The people look more barbarous to begin with, their occupations are all of a rough nature, and the old Confucian doctrines have never penetrated to them. They have always led a merely animal rather than an intellectual life, an existence of strife rather than of thought, and to this day the Imperial army consists almost exclusively of Manchu soldiers.

Our progress was very slow. For many days we travelled on leisurely, with occasional stoppages long enough to enable me to make excursions into the interior. I tried every means of conveyance—bullock-carts, Mongol ponies, Cossack horses. It was tiring work, but gave me extraordinary opportunities of making myself familiar with the country and its inhabitants. At last I reached Kharbin, a famous town, being the junction where the three railways of Manchuria meet, viz. the Vladivostok, the Port Arthur, and the Siberian lines.

KHARBIN

"Of all the places I have visited during this long journey, Kharbin seems to

Of all the places I have visited during this long journey, Kharbin seems to me the dreariest, the most desolate. A dull, cold autumn afternoon greeted me on my arrival. The rain fell in torrents; not only did the water pour down from [71] the skies, but it oozed up from the ground as well. The river had overflowed, and all the land was inundated. Half the place stood under water. The railway station looked like a little island in the midst of a marsh. Together with the few passengers for Vladivostok I was carried on men's shoulders into the waiting-room, a mere barn, where we found a mixed crowd of mujiks and Cossacks with their luggage, which consisted of bedding, cooking utensils, packages and bundles of all sorts and sizes, tied together, piled around them.

The same place also served as refreshment room, and at one end of it about a dozen officers were dining at a big table. A pretentious gilded chandelier—ironically reminding one of Western luxury—formed the centre-piece. But I had no time to admire its beauty or even to sit down to my meal, although I was nearly famished. The station-master came bustling up to me with a very disconsolate countenance and informed me that he had received a telegram intimating that a bridge near Liaoyang had been carried away by the floods, and that in consequence of the defective state of the roads it was impossible to say when the next train would start.

It would be difficult to describe my consternation on hearing this depressing announcement, for I fully realized the awfulness of my position should I be [72] compelled to make a prolonged stay in this place. The roads were so bad that excursions would be out of the question, and I should have to remain a prisoner in my carriage until the road was open again.

Meanwhile, I gladly accepted the offer of a seat in a *tarantass* to drive round the town. Kharbin is of interest from a modern point of view because it is one of the headquarters of the Russians in Manchuria.

The town has sprung up within recent years, about the time of the Chino-Japanese war. It consists of barracks and military quarters, ammunition stores, railroad factories, and a few private houses for the families of officers, railway officials, and employés. It has no pretence to beauty, and in the flooded condition in which I saw it, its gloomy buildings, streaming with rain, looked deplorable. We came past some shops where tinned meats, vegetables, and other provisions are sold. There is also a hotel, which I prefer not to describe. I was told that the place even boasts a café and music-hall, the only place of poor amusement for the officers and their wives in garrison there. Kharbin is supposed to have about fifteen thousand inhabitants, but where were they? Were they dead, asleep, or hiding? I could not see a single living being. Could this be altogether accounted for by the weather, even allowing that the water in the streets rose to the knees of the horses, and that the [73] wheels of our vehicle were submerged to the axle?

As we drove along my amiable guide explained to me that Kharbin is a military place, destined to see much active service in the event of a war, because, being situated on the junction of three great railway lines, it would be the centre for the mobilization and concentration of the troops. It would probably become the headquarters of the intendant and of the ammunition service. Hospitals, too, would be erected and the Red Cross would have a large staff there. I listened with interest to all these conjectures and plans for the future.

It was night when we returned to the station, where an agreeable surprise awaited me. I was told that a goods train with a convoy of coolies and troops to repair the line which had been destroyed, would be ready to start a little after midnight. Could my carriage be attached to it? I inquired. At first it seemed doubtful. No one appeared to know how far we could get, and there was even some question as to whether the road would bear the weight of the train. However, anything, no matter what, would be better than Kharbin, I thought; even the uncertainty of the future was preferable to the certainty of the present.

About three o'clock in the morning, after an interminable night of bustling, [74] coming and going of troops, rushing about of coolies, shunting and whistling of engines, we at last began to move. The train presented a curious appearance. It consisted chiefly of open trucks and a few wagons in which the soldiers lay huddled together, with their winter coats tucked under their heads for pillows, while hundreds of coolies were packed like cattle in the open carriages.

At first we passed slowly through a vast, partially submerged plain. Often the road was entirely under water, and in various places so badly damaged that

we had to proceed with the greatest possible caution. More than once the coolies had to turn out with pickaxe, shovel, and building material to repair the line, under the strict supervision of the officers of the railway service. I availed myself of the frequent stoppages and our altogether casual progress to study the country.

When at last we reached the large province of Central Manchuria there was a notable change in the geographical aspect. The ground became hilly and wooded. We followed several winding valleys, irrigated by tortuous watercourses, and surrounded by mountain ridges. In some parts it was decidedly pretty. The soil is fertile, and nature has endowed it with many precious gifts. The mountain slopes are rich in minerals and the woods abound with game. The mineral wealth of Manchuria is as yet unexplored, [75] and there are comparatively few gold, silver, and copper mines in process of exploitation. Some foreign syndicates have been formed, more especially in the south, and these have proved successful, but since the Russian occupation of the railway district they have been hampered by all sorts of difficulties, and except in the free port of Niu-chwang, the introduction of foreign capital has been stopped.

In actual size Central Manchuria is considerably smaller than the northern district of Tsi-tsi-kar—also known as Halung-kiang—but the population of the north is only about one million, while Central Manchuria contains twice as many inhabitants. The seat of government for this latter district is at Kirin, a very ancient town with quaint houses built in the old Chinese style, yamens with shining roofs, temples and pagodas, all very picturesque.

Kirin itself is famous for the battlemented wall which, with its heavy ramparts and pagoda-like towers, is very imposing. But the chief attraction of this provincial capital is the surrounding scenery. Valleys and mountains, dark forests and distant blue mountain peaks, form a most charming picture. It is indeed a glorious region, and a joy both to the sportsman and to the artist. The fishing in the mountain streams is excellent, and there are still numbers of leopards, bears, wolves, a certain kind of deer, foxes, and hares in the [76] forests. For the artist the opportunities here are not less ample; pretty woodland scenery, attractive bits of street corners, and town scenery, and above all the historical monuments, the celebrated royal tombs, and the commemorative tablets on the river banks, or hidden in the sacred groves; all these are excellent subjects for sketches.

The great difficulty at the present moment is how to reach these beautiful regions. There are, so far, only a very few stations in process of building on this route, and it must be remembered that even these, though called by the names of the various places, are often twenty or thirty miles distant from the towns they represent, and that there are scarcely any means of conveyance, and that in many cases there is not even a road!

It would seem as if the Eastern Chinese Railway scrupulously avoided all inhabited regions, and certainly in its present condition, and as long as there are no branch lines, it is useless for all purposes of ordinary traffic or commercial enterprise. The Russian officers who have projected it appear to have had only one object in view, to connect in the most direct manner Vladivostok and Port Arthur with the Siberian line, for the sole purpose of transporting troops in case of need with the least possible delay.

A STREET IN KHARBIN
"The water in the streets rose to the knees of the horses"
[To face page 76]

All this great work has been done quietly, unostentatiously, and without arousing any ill-feeling among the natives. At the present moment one may travel for a whole day without catching sight of anything more conspicuous than railway buildings, barracks, and encampments with Russian soldiers lining the entire length of the route. [77]

After several days' travelling we emerged into cultivated plains, rich pasture land intersected by patches of Indian corn, beans, etc. Crops of all kinds presented themselves before our eyes. The country no longer showed the barren desolation of the Gobi desert, nor the romantic wildness of Central Manchuria. It was peopled! There were men working in the fields, and I could see houses and little farms, poor and miserable enough it is true, but at least indicative of human life.

* * * * *

FROM MUKDEN STATION TO MUKDEN TOWN

It was dawn when I looked out of my carriage window—a dull grey dawn. The sky was covered with leaden clouds and the rain came down in torrents. The river banks were entirely submerged, and the train stood still in a sea of mud. The scene of general deluge vividly recalled my ideas of the Flood, and it was like stepping out of the ark when I alighted from my carriage. Close by I saw a modest structure, one storey high, more like a peasant's hut than anything else, and I could scarcely believe that this was the station intended for Mukden, the capital of Manchuria. To my consternation I learnt that the train would go no farther that day. It might go on to-morrow or perhaps in a week's time. [78]

There was plenty of time therefore to explore Mukden, although the town was over twenty miles away. But how was I to get there? There was no road to be seen and no vehicle anywhere about. I made inquiries from the station-master, a Russian officer, with a long beard and resplendent with gold lace. He advised me to send my interpreter to one of the neighbouring farms, where I might possibly obtain a Chinese cart, a driver, and a couple of mules, to convey me to Mukden in as short a time as the state of the roads would permit. I followed this advice. The courier wasted the greater part of the day in arguing with the farmers, while I was left in my carriage at the mercy of the hurricane, and occupied the time in writing down my unpleasant impressions, wind and rain supplying the accompaniment of music.

Towards the close of the afternoon my faithful Sancho returned, and pointed to a kind of cabriolet on two wheels with three mules harnessed in tandem fashion, and driven by a crooked little Chinaman. I cannot deny that the effect was extremely picturesque. The car was lacquered yellow, the hood covered with blue; the mules were grey, and the little driver was sheltered by a huge umbrella of gold-coloured oil-cloth. But although picturesque, it was far from comfortable. The vehicle had no springs and no seat; in fact, it consisted simply of a wooden board about two and a half feet square, on which one had to sit cross-legged like a Turk or a tailor. If the occupant happens to be neither the one nor the other, he suffers agonies before five minutes have passed. The only attempt at comfort was a small calico rug at the bottom of the cart, but this was a poor protection against the extremely hard wood of Manchuria. [79]

I hesitated a moment before venturing to enter this uncomfortable conveyance, and pictured vividly to myself the horrors of a night's journey in it. But I had promised to visit, if possible, the site of our Mission station, which had been pillaged and burned in the last Boxer insurrection, and which had been the scene of so much noble martyrdom. So after all I made up my mind to go.

Little Li-Hu cracked his long whip, which, by the by, looked more like a fishing rod than a whip. And indeed, I might have amused myself with some angling on the way, for the mules were up to their fetlocks in chocolate-coloured liquid mud. [80]

The first sight which attracted my attention on the road was a one-storeyed building, used as barracks and occupied by Cossacks. I learnt that it served as an encampment for the protection of the railway station.

Then followed a long stretch of road without anything remarkable to be seen.

FROM MUKDEN FLATS ON TO THE TOWN
After a Water-colour Drawing by the Author
"Then followed a long stretch of road without anything remarkable to be seen"
[To face page 80]

There were fields on both sides of the way, but they could not be seen because all the land was entirely submerged as in Egypt at the rising of the Nile. I presumed that we were on a road, for we advanced between two rows of irregularly planted trees; I also concluded that at one time this road had been paved, perhaps centuries ago, but it was decidedly bumpy now.

These speculations were presently confirmed when we arrived at a bridge delicately arching a creek. It was a very fine structure, carved in Chinese fashion, and of great architectural beauty. I left my carriage to examine it more closely, and when I had scraped off some of the mud with which it was encrusted, I found that it was entirely built of white marble.

After crossing the river the road became still worse. I was jolted up and down, thrown from side to side, my head was knocked against the wooden [81] frame of the hood, and after a mile or so of this torture I could bear it no longer and decided to try the back of one of the mules.

Riding without a saddle on the back of a thin Manchu mule cannot be said to be a comfortable mode of travelling, and my agonies are better imagined than described.

Here was I, in an unknown country, surrounded by a desert which seemed more desolate than ever in its flooded condition, the rain coming down as if all the sluices of heaven had been opened, while the tiny driver at whose mercy I was, might, for all I knew, be a cut-throat.

My vocabulary was as yet limited to two words, *how-di* and *poo-how*. Perhaps they are written quite differently, but this is how they sound. The former stands for everything that is good, pretty, pleasant (I have never had occasion to use it); the other expresses the reverse, and I was quite tired of saying it, because it never proved to be of the slightest effect.

We encountered no one on the road, but passed one little vehicle like mine, in which I counted at least ten visible occupants. Four were seated on the shafts, some on the mules, and the others outside on the hood. I could not see how many there were inside. All the outside passengers had large umbrellas of oil-cloth, the same as my driver, and they looked like big sunflowers. It was [82] quite cheering to see those people so perfectly happy, laughing and joking under such wretched conditions.

Their stoicism gave me relief, and I shook the water from my dripping clothes and felt a little better too. But as night approached and the desolation became more oppressive, my self-confidence fell from hour to hour. Darkness magnified all the surroundings, and gave them a fantastic aspect. The lights in the distant farm-houses looked like will-o'-the-wisps; the trees became phantoms, and the barking of the dogs sounded like the roar of the dragons, which, as every one knows, are natives of the Yellow Empire. All the fairy stories of my childhood came back to my memory, and assumed a shape in the reality of my surroundings.

I must add, too, that what I had read lately about Manchuria was not encouraging. The country, I knew, was still in a state of agitation and suppressed revolt. Gangs of bandits traversed the country in all directions, burning farmsteads, pillaging villages, murdering travellers. Skirmishes often took place between them and the Cossacks, and more than once during my journey I heard the firing of shots. The most dreaded of all these ruffians are

the Chunchuses; they are formed into more or less organized bodies, like the bandits of ancient Italy, and they possess as much influence as the Mafia of Sicily. [83]

It was getting late and we had travelled for many hours without seeing any trace of houses. I could ask no questions, because I could only say those two words, *poo-how* and *how-di*. Even if Li-Hu had been of a communicative turn of mind I should not have understood his explanations, so we continued our lugubrious ride in perfect silence, I perched on the back of a mule, with the shafts of the cart for stirrups, while Li-Hu had the carriage all to himself. He wriggled about like a serpent and finally sought consolation for the bitter reality of the present in the happy dreams of the past.

At last the will-o'-the-wisps drew nearer, the phantoms took the form of ordinary trees, and the roars of the dragons resolved themselves into the barking of dogs.

I scarcely dared to believe that I had reached my destination, lest I should be disappointed. Li-Hu was sound asleep, but the mules made straight for a dismal-looking building, and stopped as by instinct in front of a conspicuous signboard. By the same instinct, I suppose, Li-Hu awoke and I asked eagerly, "Mukden? Mukden?" But evidently I was wrong, for he emphatically shook his head.

After a while the innkeeper appeared on the threshold and looked even more forbidding than the house itself, through the open doors of which escaped thick clouds of opium-smoke. I should have preferred to remain on the back of my mule, as there was no possibility of stretching my legs because of the mud, but they were already unharnessing my beast, so I had no choice, and was obliged to enter the house. [84]

The place was lugubrious in the extreme. It looked like a witch's cave, and all things combined to complete this impression. There was the cauldron hanging on a chain over the fire, while enormous logs of wood diffused a sulphurous flame in the light of which the inmates of the place looked truly terrible. At least a dozen men were crouching on the floor, and several others lay asleep on the kang or heated earthen bench which ran all along the dwelling. They were smoking opium in small bronze pipes.

At my entrance most of them roused themselves from their stupor, and their small eyes expressed astonishment, united with curiosity, mistrust, and hatred. I could detect all the hostility of the East against the West in that look. The ill-will of the yellow race towards "the white devils" manifested itself in all its bitterness and force. I must confess that I did not feel quite at my ease in this uncanny company, and it was only the deep interest which I felt in these people, in the den and its surroundings, the novelty of the situation and my passionate interest in human nature, which helped me through the ordeal. [85]

What was going to happen? Would they remain passive, or were they going to attack me? They were interrogating Li-Hu. It was like a play to watch the proceedings. Without understanding the language, it was easy enough to follow the drift of the argument. "Who is it? Where is he going? What has he got?"

From the expression of Li-Hu's face and his hesitation in answering, I gathered that the information he had to give concerning his charge was not satisfactory, but I also noted with interest how cleverly he concocted a story to his own advantage. Evidently the shrewd Chinaman had in his mind two strong points in my favour. In the first place I had not yet paid him, and in the second place I had been entrusted to his care by the station-master, by whom he was known. I also detected that he did not want to rouse the animosity of the other men, consequently he never mentioned my private car, probably also by the advice of the station-master, and from the expression of his face and the manner in which he turned out his pockets, he was clearly representing me as a poor missionary who was going to Mukden to fetch his pay at the bank, and whom it would not be worth while to kidnap on his way there.

The minutes dragged on like so many hours; the night seemed endless. Finally, to pass the time, I began to draw with some coloured chalks. Would that interest them? I wondered. I could not be sure at first, but the ruffians slowly gathered round me and I never had more complacent spectators. Those men who, a few minutes ago, would have taken my life, or at least my purse, suddenly became quite friendly. Like the lyre of Orpheus, my pictures did wonders, soothing the savage instincts and softening the passions of these brigands. It was the greatest triumph my modest crayons ever won for me. [86]

At last there was a general stir. Li-Hu prepared his cart, and we started once

more. It was still dark, but the rain had ceased and the cold rays of the moon from time to time broke through the parting clouds. By means of these occasional flashes of light I discerned in the distance, silhouetted against the horizon, the dark outlines of a pagoda. Surely that was the point we were making for. We had long since left the so-called main road, and were jolting and jerking along by fields of turnips and Indian corn. The shocks were perhaps not quite so rough as before, on the half-paved highroad, but their violence was yet amazing.

It was daybreak when we arrived before the principal gate of Mukden, and after the night of darkness and peril the glories of the city seemed enhanced. The sky was cloudless and intensely blue, as if enamelled in cobalt on a [87] golden ground. The richly sculptured fronts of the houses shone with truly Oriental splendour. It was the early hour of the morn. People poured out of the city gates to start their daily tasks in the fields and farms. Every one wore bright-coloured garments, and looked happy and cheerful. Everything breathed contentment: the effect was charming. It was the victory of light over darkness.

The sun, like a great magician, had waved his wand, touched and dispersed clouds and gloom, and thrown, so it would seem, a veil of oblivion over the sadness and misery of the past night, to give courage and hope to begin another day.

IV

THE CAPITAL OF MANCHURIA [88]

My surprise on first beholding the famous city of Mukden was as complete as it was agreeable. The scene before me was simply delightful. At first I could not distinguish anything clearly, neither lines nor forms. I was dazzled by the intensity of colour and light.

The façade of every house was ornamented with strange carvings and mouldings; never before had I seen such fantastic prodigality of human imagination. All the lines curve upward, and every house resembles a pagoda on a small scale. So many motives, so many different colours; red, yellow, green, blue, in endless profusion, the effect being increased by rich gilding.

In front of the houses are shops or booths, where are exposed—generally in the open—goods and merchandise of all kinds, arranged in fanciful pyramids in accordance with Oriental caprice. Embroideries, rich silks, artificial flowers, fans, and umbrellas, anything, in fact, to tempt the local taste or satisfy the daily demands. The displays of porcelain are particularly attractive, also the shows of silver and brass ware. Most fascinating are the stalls of the bric-à-brac dealers with their fine lacquer-work, fluted vases of [89] priceless value, old porcelains, cloisonné boxes, and artistically designed snuff-bottles[2].

[2] The Chinese do not use boxes, but snuff-bottles of great value.

Before every booth a tall mast or pole is dressed, from which floats a flag as signboard, and both are elaborately inscribed with advertisements of wares sold inside the shop. The bootmakers' insignia are particularly artistic and only surpassed in splendour by the rich festoons of gold which mark the pawnbrokers' shops. The main thoroughfare, with its endless variety of cabalistic design and rich colouring, is like an Oriental bazaar or the gorgeous scenery of a theatre. But what struck me most was the enormous vitality and activity of this marvellous city.

It was like watching an ants' nest to see this surging tide of human beings incessantly flooding the squares and streets. Men and women, young and old, of all ranks and all nationalities, push and press past one another. Some are carried in beautiful chairs, others content themselves with a modest kind of wheelbarrow, in which six or seven persons can be accommodated on a narrow board, and which is pushed along by a famished-looking coolie. These wheelbarrows answer the purpose of omnibuses in the Manchu capital, and they take a person from one end of the city to the other for about a quarter of [90] a halfpenny. "Rickshaws" have recently come into fashion; they are a great improvement on the old means of conveyance, for instead of being pushed they are pulled along. All true Manchus, however, prefer riding on horseback to any other mode of locomotion.

Whatever room is left in the street is taken up by pedestrians, labourers carrying enormous loads, and coolies going about their daily business. It is an

impressive sight, and once more I came to the conclusion that the intrinsic character of a place is not expressed in the arrangement of its streets, or in the height and style of its buildings, but in the general manifestation of its activity.

While the eye takes in all these various details, the ear need not be idle. The air is full of sound. Strains of music proceeding from the tea-houses, costermongers' cries, shrieks of quarrelsome children, and high-pitched voices in admonition; shouting and noise of all sorts and in endless variety are heard.

At every step there is a fresh surprise. Fortunately, so far, no guide-books have been written to describe the attractions of the Manchu capital, and no cumbersome descriptions spoil the effect of its genuine charms

To form an idea of the plan of the city, imagine an oblong chess-board. Like [91]
all Chinese towns, it is regular in the principal lines. There are two main streets in the form of a cross, intersected by innumerable narrow lanes, and in the middle of the town, where the two chief thoroughfares cross, stands a high tower from the top of which a drum and a gong announce the beginning and the close of the day. Also from this high vantage ground the alarm is given in case of danger, and a detachment of soldiers, stationed in a sort of pigeon-holes, spend the hours of their watch in peaceful slumber.

It would be difficult to enumerate all the places of interest which Mukden contains, for everything is interesting to the Western mind, even to the smallest cottage with its curiously shaped roof and quaint style. And the interest lies not only in their material conception or in their exterior, but also in their inner qualities, and especially in the fact that they give expression to the mental and artistic ideas of the nation. As has already been said, it is at first the general effect, the picturesqueness, and the novelty, which strike one as so charming. Some of the houses are very dilapidated, the walls lean over, and the roofs are covered with a tangled growth of moss and grass. But all this makes them the more attractive from an artistic point of view.

Among the most interesting public edifices are the yamens belonging to the [92]
Government, and occupied by the Governor and some others of the mandarins of high degree; one or two Lama monasteries; the large buildings where the Russian Consul and the Commander-in-Chief reside; and last, but not least, the building occupied by the famous Russo-Chinese Bank and its agents.

Naturally the Imperial Palace is a place of great interest. With its enclosure of walls it forms a city within the city. It is divided into various courts, and consists of a great many separate structures, detached houses, halls, and pavilions. Taken separately these are not of great importance, but the whole effect is very striking. The colonnades, beams, and brackets are of carved wood, richly painted and gilded. All the woodwork is painted dark purple, and the roofs, like those of all edifices connected with the Imperial Family, or dedicated to Confucius, are covered with yellow tiles. The greater part of the palace is now occupied by Russian troops.

Near the palace gate is a low building in which a whole detachment of soldiers is quartered, and the open court is lined with cannon. It was only on my showing them a special permission from the commander that the sentries allowed me to pass.

The interior of the palace is in a sad state of ruin. Since the Imperial Family [93]
departed for Pekin, it has never been inhabited, and the few art treasures still remaining are carelessly scattered about the place. There are some valuable panels, some precious jades, and exquisite porcelains, but the greater portion of them disappeared after the last war. Some say that these treasures have been stolen by the Boxers, but according to another version the thieves must be looked for elsewhere. I was told that the very rare collection of old manuscripts and official documents is now quietly reposing among the archives at St. Petersburg to be protected from destruction.

My eyes wandered from the reception-halls to the vestibules, from the terraces to the gardens. It was all so original, so quaint. But the thing which specially strikes the visitor is the incongruity of transforming this sacred cradle of the master minds of the Celestial Empire into a Cossack encampment. As I passed out through the principal entrance, a Muscovite warrior stood on guard by the Dragon's door, and his white blouse contrasted strangely with the heavy bulk of the palace.

As the day advanced, the crowds in the city increased. Russian soldiers paraded the streets and patrolled the ramparts in small detachments. I saw officers on frisky ponies and ladies with their families going about in the national *troïkas*. [94]

It is especially noteworthy that these Russian people not only feel perfectly at home among the Manchus, but that the conquered people associate on the most friendly terms with their conquerors in the taverns and inns. They sit amicably side by side and appear to be the best of friends. It is true that many of the enemies were born on the same soil; they are practically semi-Asiatics themselves; often have a common origin, and belong to the same race; above all, live the same primitive and uncultivated life.

The great difference which separates the European, whether of the Anglo-Saxon or the Latin race, from the Mongol and the Tartar, does not exist here. As soon as a fight is concluded, they settle down to their ordinary life; the greatest cruelties committed on either side are soon forgotten. Hatred may lurk in their innermost minds, but outwardly they live in peace together.

They have the same tastes, the same amusements, and agree particularly on the question of frugality. Contempt of comfort, indifference to refinement, and a very rudimentary degree of culture, are common to both of them. One thing which even more prevents any feeling of coldness arising between them is that, far from trying to transform and educate the conquered nation, the [95] conquerors often stoop to the low level of the subjugated people.

With the exception of the railway I am not aware that any attempts have been made to civilize the Manchus. Commerce is not encouraged and international traffic does not exist, because all the towns have thus far been closed to foreigners. The Russian Government is even taking steps to get into its own hands the English and American mining operations which are being financed by some new loans. In spiritual matters the same restrictions prevail, and the difficulties which are put in the way of the missionary work increase from day to day.

In local government a semblance of the old forms is preserved. Manchuria is divided into three administrations, Tsi-tsi-kar, Kirin, and Mukden. Each province has a governor, and all three are under the authority of a viceroy or mandarin of the highest rank, who resides at Mukden.

The official yamen, and the staff of dignitaries of various degrees, are here exactly what they are everywhere else. They all appear extremely busy, writing extraordinary cabalistic signs on sheets of rice-paper. The small details of local affairs keep them occupied all day; probably they know nothing of matters of serious importance, but they seem admirably suited to [96] fill a post which involves a minimum of responsibility and brings with it a good substantial salary. There appears to be a perfect *entente cordiale* between the Manchu mandarins and the Russian generals, and if perchance a difference of opinion should occur, the difficulty is generally smoothed over by the irresistible influence and the mysterious power of the Russo-Chinese Bank.

The important event of my first day was the official reception given by the Governor. I was carried to the palace in a chair, followed by an interpreter and my little major-domo. The canopy of the chair was covered with green silk, and four stalwart fellows carried me through the narrow, tortuous streets. The shaking was terrible, for where the pavement should have been there were big holes filled with liquid mud. I could forgive my bearers for their rough handling of my chair, but it was difficult not to resent being bumped on to the ground every time they changed shoulders, which they did without slackening their pace. It was not a great height to fall from, but the sensation was decidedly unpleasant. It was like a nightmare; the time occupied by the fall seemed interminable, and on reaching the ground I felt like being hurled to the bottom of a precipice.

At last we came to the principal entrance of the palace, at least what I supposed to be the principal entrance, judging from a group of queerly attired [97] creatures, who presented arms—and such arms! It was an extraordinary collection, reminding me of the get-up of some old Chinese play. They were fierce-looking warriors, carrying halberds, javelins, and sickles on long poles, glittering and sparkling in the midday sun.

As seen from the outside, the palace is a poor structure. The massive wall which flanks the front gate is decorated with pictures of dragons to scare away, as I was told, evil spirits and "the white devils." The first court I came to was not much more attractive. It seemed, in fact, no better than a stable yard. There were a few horses tied to their stalls and some shelters for the soldiers and servants. I had to cross several courts before I arrived at the court of honour, which was square like the others, and had halls on each side. It was beautifully decorated with flowers and shrubs. There were chrysanthemums, and dwarf orange, peach, and pear trees, especially cultivated for the purpose of ornamentation. The effect produced was exquisite, and though the surroundings are all more or less in a state of

decadence, that inner court is a picturesque specimen of Chinese domestic architecture.

But I had no time to study it in detail, for the Mandarin stood there in the centre, surrounded by his court. He was in a robe of dark blue silk, [98] magnificently embroidered, and his suite was no less gorgeously attired. When I appeared upon the threshold of the vestibule we exchanged profound bows, and repeated this salutation until we met half way. Then we shook hands in Western fashion, no easy task, considering that my host's finger-nails were at least two inches long. The customary introductions over, he led the way to his private apartments.

The first room was entirely Chinese, and contained some exquisitely carved armchairs. The effect of the second room was spoiled by two easy chairs of Vienna manufacture, a hideous French clock, and a tablecloth, probably of Manchester make.

The preliminary compliments once exchanged—a formidable business here—His Excellency asked me some dozen questions which in the West would be considered most indiscreet, but are obligatory in the East. Then he conducted me to the dining-hall, where luncheon was set on a round table profusely decorated with flowers and sweetmeats.

Innumerable little dishes were scattered over the silk tablecloth, and saucers filled with raisins, grapes, almonds, olives, and a variety of dainties. Etiquette prescribes that the guest shall be placed on the left of his host, and that the first mouthful of food shall be put on to his plate by the host himself. After [99] that the servants bring in dishes containing the most delicate productions of the Chinese culinary art. Fish soup and snail soup, sharks' fins in unpalatable jellies, all kinds of minces and hashes, and patties with sauces most unpleasant to Western taste, composed the menu.

Custom, which regulates all public and social functions in this country, demands that no less than fifty different dishes be presented to a guest of distinction. All these concoctions are handed round on large trays, in series of eight at a time. They look different, but all taste alike, at least so it seemed to me. They are both sweet and sour, and whether they go by the name of minced birds'-nests, or croquettes of dog-flesh, I could detect no difference in taste. The other guests, however, fully made up for my want of appreciation.

As the meal proceeded, the conversation became more animated. When the subjects dictated by ceremony had been disposed of, the company expressed much interest in my researches and studies. My host questioned me on many points. He was decidedly clever, and although one was apt to forget the solemnity of the occasion on looking at his somewhat ridiculous costume and hat, formed in the shape of a pagoda surmounted by a precious stone the size [100] of a potato, and adorned with waving peacock's feathers—in which attire even the wisest man would look a fool—I could not help being impressed by his sagacity.

He was somewhat reserved, but seemed pleased to talk about his country, and gave me some valuable information when he saw how much interested I was in the ancient history of the land, and the origin of its inhabitants. For they, thousands of years ago, had proceeded from the same stock as the people of my own race, who had founded the kingdom in Pannonia. The foundation of the Manchu empire is connected even more closely than I thought with the migration of the Huns. It would, indeed, open a vast field of study for the historian to seek the connecting link and the affinity existing between the first Magyars and Manchus.

The repast over, the Governor proposed a visit to the imperial tombs, the chief sight of the country. Indeed, there is nothing the people venerate more deeply than those monuments of the defunct members of their dynasty; they are the pride of the nation.

We started without much delay. It was a glorious afternoon, and in the brightness of the autumn sun the country looked its best. Our cavalcade galloped across pasture land, where horses and cattle peaceably grazed together. Here and there a shepherd sought diversion in the consoling melody [101] of some old song, like all human beings whose lives are spent in solitude, and in the contemplation of the immensity of nature. The music was simple and the instrument simpler still, an archaic flute cut out of a reed.

Skirting the far end of the pasture was a dark brushwood; my companions told me that this was the sacred grove containing the imperial tombs. The distance to the town might be about six or seven miles, but our little horses carried us quickly over the ground. The Manchu dignitaries, in their flowing silken robes, their pagoda-like hats, their embroideries and long pigtails,

looked unquestionably most picturesque. My mount and my saddle were similar to theirs, pretty, but at the same time I must say that I never rode on anything more uncomfortable than a Chinese saddle of embossed wood, with stirrups in the shape of slippers, and fixed so high that knees and chin nearly meet.

Two large stone monuments flank the path which leads to the sacred grove. Forbidding-looking dragons guard the entrance. A deep cutting gives access to the place of interment, and this long alley is guarded on both sides by monsters of various descriptions. Elephants, camels, gigantic human figures, are placed at intervals facing each other, all cut in stone, and intended to ward off the evil spirits. [102]

The beauty of the place is indescribable. The darkness of the foliage, the white stone statues, and the paved pathway winding through the woods, all help to give it the character of an enchanted forest, where solitude reigns, and the air is full of poetry.

Later we crossed some marble bridges of exquisite workmanship, their curiously sculptured balustrades softly reflecting themselves in the blue waters of the little streams flowing lazily between the flowering banks. I was told that the statues, the streams, and the bridges, have all of them some allegorical meaning in connexion with the spirits of the departed.

At length, passing through a porch, we stood face to face with an arch of such surpassing beauty, that for a moment I was dazed and lost in speechless admiration. Surely this must be one of the greatest, one of the most wonderful architectural creations of the Yellow Empire. Material, design, proportions, all the details, are so supremely beautiful. It is of marble, the arch resting on two huge blocks with cross-bars and buttresses supported by imperial dragons. The decorations are exquisite, and the carving of the friezes unique of its kind. Not even among all the marvellous monuments of Pekin, Nankin, or Hankow, did I find anything to rival it. The beauty of the conception, as well as the finished workmanship, impress one most forcibly, because of its being so perfectly in keeping with the signification of the whole triumphal arch, which symbolizes the passage of the spirit, after a life of strife and victory, to the abodes of their ancestors and everlasting peace. In this respect I know of nothing to compare with it, unless it be that pearl of Asiatic architecture, the Taj Mahal. [103]

The tomb itself is enclosed by courts, halls, sacrificial temples, guard-houses, and sentry-sheds. We left our horses at the inner entrance, and the massive doors of red lacquer-work groaned on their hinges as they were slowly pushed open by half a dozen soldiers. We found ourselves in a square yard, a kind of court of honour, with avenues of trees many centuries old, giants and monsters in stone, and canals fenced in with marble balustrades and arched by bridges. These courts are divided by open galleries which lead to the central pagoda. This square building contains the commemorative tablet, a monument cut out of a single stone of about thirty feet high. The whole stands on a colossal tortoise, larger than two elephants.

Immense cauldrons, big enough to cook a whole ox at a time, for sacrificial purposes, are placed at short distances. Once a year a great ceremony is held in honour of the Great Ancestor. On this occasion the Emperor should be present in person, but for many years the imperial court has been represented by ambassadors; and considering what a journey from Pekin to Mukden involves, it is not surprising that the sovereign is content to be present by proxy. I was told that the mandarins selected to undertake this onerous pilgrimage are often persons whose presence is not desired at Pekin. Their adventurous journey often occupies many months, and often there have been cases in which the envoys never returned at all. [104]

The Great Ancestor was one of the founders of the Manchu dynasty in China, and his real tomb is cut out in the heart of the mountain, but the exact spot is unknown. We spent the greater part of the afternoon among the tombs, and I made the best use I could of the permission to sketch and to take photographs. But the most perfect apparatus, and the pen of the most accomplished narrator, are bound to fail to do justice to the reality. Art and nature are blended so exquisitely here that it is impossible to give an adequate idea of the place. However beautiful the individual monuments may be—and they are very beautiful—the real charm of the ideal site lies in the perfect harmony of solitude and peace.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE IMPERIAL TOMBS
"The massive doors of red lacquer-work groaned on their hinges"
[To face page 104]

On the return journey we again passed through the muddy, dreary suburbs. Most of the houses along the dull, deserted roads, are built of clay and [105] covered with straw. Rough planks close the entrance, and from the windows the rice-paper hangs down in tatters. We met several funeral processions, the huge black coffins being carried in front.

I have forgotten to mention that cholera was raging in the town; hundreds of people died daily, and the sanitary conditions of the place were so wretched that nothing could be done to stop it. Considering the manner in which the coolies live, it is only surprising that they do not all succumb. On this account the authorities at first had been averse to the idea of my visit to Mukden, but as there was smallpox in China and typhoid fever in Korea, there did not seem much to choose between the two; and, besides, I was firmly convinced that Providence would let me finish the work I had undertaken to do.

The epidemic broke out three months ago, and had claimed many victims among the Russian troops. The morale of the men was at a very low ebb in consequence. Upon the coolies and the Manchus the effect was different. Their innate fatalism teaches them to look upon death as a benevolent friend, and as they bear away the coffins with the remains of their loved ones, they look as unconcerned as if they were taking them to a place of joy. All the small objects cherished by the dead are placed upon the coffin to be burned [106] at the grave-side, and when the smoke rises up to heaven, popular superstition has it that all these objects assume shape again in a higher sphere, for the gratification of their former owners. It is only right, however, to add, that as the heirs are solicitous to save anything that may be of value, counterfeits of the real things, in paper or cardboard, are often substituted, and so the *auto-da-fé* takes place only in effigy.

Having been entertained at luncheon by the Chinese Governor, to make the day complete I was the guest of the Russian Resident at dinner. We may criticize the Muscovite system of government, we may censure the ways and means employed by the Russian administration, but there is only one opinion as regards Russian hospitality. No matter what quarter of the globe one comes from, whether one be a political ally or a traditional foe, a Russian never fails in the duties of hospitality. As long as the guest is under his roof he is looked upon as a member of the family. Host and hostess, in fact all the household, go out of their way to show kindness to him. And it is all done on such a lavish scale! His room is overheated, rugs and furs are wrapped round him whether he desires them or not, and above all a special point is made of loading him with food and drink at all hours of the day and of the night. [107]

The Russian Residence, or Consulate, as it is still sometimes called before the world, is a yamen like all other public buildings in China, only perhaps a little more ruinous than those I saw in the morning. The interior is greatly lacking in comfort and luxury. It gives rather the impression of a camp than of a home; there is no furniture beyond what is strictly necessary, and nothing has been done to make it pretty or attractive. The only redeeming feature is the table, which appears to be permanently set for meals. It is covered with quite as many little dishes as the table of the Mandarin, but instead of fruit and sweetmeats, they contain hors-d'œuvres, such as caviare, herrings, smoked salmon, cucumber, and all the innumerable varieties which compose the

famous national *Zakouska*. There was a perfect array of bottles on the table; I do not remember ever seeing so many crowded on to one table. There were wines from the Crimea, various liqueurs, and vodka. During dinner the guests smoked perfumed cigarettes, and talked of their family affairs and distant homes. It was difficult to realize that the boundless plains of Siberia separated us from the banks of the Neva, for the picture before me was so typically Russian, in all its variety of shades and colours. I almost felt as if I were "in company with the gentlemen" of Tourgueniéff. [108]

My visit to Mukden had certainly been full of interest. Not only the town itself, its famous monuments, and its strangely superannuated people, but the whole situation as it is at present, offers endless scope for speculation. Chinese mandarins and Russian generals, Cossacks and coolies, how oddly they are amalgamated in incoherent groups! What developments may not the future have in store? Truly this is a fascinating problem. Will Manchuria be more prosperous under the new régime? Will the people be able to rise to a higher level? As I took leave of the spot, now so desolate, where the mission settlement once stood, I asked myself whether it would ever be rebuilt and whether men would come forward to take the place of those martyrs who had sacrificed their life in the cause of the orphans and forsaken children of China. Casting one last lingering look upon the place, which I should probably never see again, the dismal outline of the ruined bell-tower seemed to rise up in pathetic protest against human intolerance and blind persecution.

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THE RETURN JOURNEY

The city of Mukden contained so much that was of interest to me, that my stay there was prolonged beyond my original intentions. The Governor, to whom I had related all the difficulties and discomforts of my journey, very kindly placed a carriage at my disposal and gave me an escort to see me safely back to the station. But perilous as the outward journey had been, the return was no less full of various emotions. [109]

It was a beautiful autumn day when I left the town. Nature seemed to be making one last effort to assert the power of her charms before falling into her winter sleep. As we passed through the precincts of the city, the gardens literally glittered with colour. All imaginable shades, from copper-tinted saffron to bronzed purple, were there displayed. These gardens are certainly most beautifully cultivated. Presently we emerged into the open plain, and now I had the opportunity, which I had missed before, of forming some idea of the fertility of this privileged land. Manchuria is undoubtedly one of the richest countries in the world. The soil is excellent, the hills are thickly wooded, the mountains abound in minerals. Along the route we passed farms where maize and beans seemed to be chiefly cultivated, and all the people, men, women, and children, were at work in the field.

The landscape is rather monotonous. We traversed a wide plain enclosed by mountains which touch the horizon; but although the scenery cannot be called picturesque, it is not devoid of a certain grandeur. It has a charm peculiar to itself, an atmosphere of vague melancholy. All vast plains, those of Egypt for instance, or of Rajputana, have this same undefinable, intangible characteristic, of which one is faintly conscious without being able to describe it. The people who live in such a free atmosphere are naturally affected by it, and the Manchus possess all the characteristics of a race inhabiting an exposed country. [110]

The Manchu is attached to his native land; he loves to live in the open, and is never so happy as when galloping across the endless plain or hunting in the virgin forests. As we laboriously proceeded on the uneven road, my fancy had full play, and I received new ideas and impressions from these novel surroundings. Since I had explored the interior of the country more carefully, my ideas about Manchuria had certainly undergone a great change. Every now and then, however, my cogitations were rudely interrupted as we jumped over ditches, crawled up or ran down the inclines, and it was a wonder that my poor *tarantass* was not smashed in the attempt. It may be as well, perhaps, to give some idea of what a *tarantass* is like. Four small wheels, very far apart, and joined by wooden axles, were fixed in the centre to a long pole, on which the basket, in shape something between a boat and a bath, was fastened. The vibration of this pole takes the place of springs, although it would be incorrect to say that it performed the office of such civilized improvements. But the pole kept the wheels and the basket together, and this, after all, is an accomplishment to be proud of on the highroads of Asia. My carriage was not drawn by mules this time, but I had three horses harnessed abreast, in the Muscovite style. They were small Cossack horses, with long manes and tails, slightly larger than Shetland ponies, strong and [111]

lively. The middle one was somewhat bigger than the two others; it could trot, while the ponies to the right and left of it had to gallop all the time, their heads gracefully arched and held a little to one side. The harness was most eccentric, and consisted of straps without number, the use of which it was difficult to see, but the silver-nailed mountings, studded in Eastern fashion, looked decidedly picturesque.

My coachman was a Cossack, and evidently very much impressed with the importance of his mission. About fifteen men formed the escort, their white blouses and flat white caps forming a striking feature in the landscape. They are good-natured, simple-minded folk, these mujiks, with bright blue eyes, clear complexion, and a childlike expression. They are evidently quite at home in this far-away country, for the ways of life in their native land are primitive [112] and patriarchal, and differ but little from those in this foreign land. It is difficult to believe that these men can ever be cruel, and in time of war commit the greatest atrocities in cold blood and almost unconsciously. When the war is over they at once make friends with the conquered people, and freely mix with the yellow tribes. A little two-wheeled cart, containing provisions, and with a young Cossack as driver, completed my escort.

If I were asked what were the most striking objects I passed on the road, I should mention two pagodas, one of which is particularly beautiful, seven storeys high, and richly carved. Monsters of Chinese mythology and all the embellishments which the sickly imagination of that ancient race could devise, have been lavishly represented upon it. We also passed some remarkable commemorative stones—massive blocks, resting on enormous tortoises—on which are inscribed the exploits of the defunct heroes of the country. The many farms on our route testified to the agricultural resources of the land, and the villages are not without interest from a sociological point of view. The houses are very shabby and dilapidated, but what amused me was the number of children there were playing about. There did not seem to [113] be room enough to contain them all, and there were hardly any doors to be seen; the population appears to jump out of the ground like mushrooms. We met carts of various descriptions, pedestrians, strange equipages, and stranger horsemen, and to finish up with, a mandarin travelling in state. This personage was carried in a litter covered with embroidered silk, and the luggage packed, in cases of wonderful lacquer-work, was carried by his men on their backs. Suite and servants followed him in single file, and all the emblems of his dignity, flags, Chinese lanterns, umbrellas, and banners, with various inscriptions, were carried before him. His Excellency was guarded by a detachment of native soldiers, in crimson mantles with lozenge-shaped pieces of velvet let in at the front and back, and elaborately embroidered with Chinese characters. Of course, many of the details of this show were very shabby. The canopy of the litter was torn and faded, the velvet of the uniforms was caked with mud, the banners were in rags, and yet as a whole it was one of the most artistic displays I have ever seen. Asiatics certainly have the knack of making their pageants effective. A mandarin of secondary order, visiting a functionary about equal in rank to a tax-collector, has an escort of followers and soldiers amounting to several dozen men, while the highest [114] Western officials are content with two footmen behind their carriage on grand occasions.

I have already said that the journey back to Mukden station was no improvement on the journey thence, and yet, as I write these lines, seated in my comfortable railway carriage, my adventure, now that it is a thing of the past, seems like a dream to me. To make the story more interesting I must begin at the end, namely, with the dramatic incident of the journey, and tell how we only just escaped being kidnapped or possibly killed by a band of brigands. Thanks to Providence, however, no more serious harm was done to us than the fall of the *tarantass* into the swollen river, a compulsory bath in full uniform for some of the Cossacks, various bruises and scratches, and a broken litter. The intended attack was changed into flight, and the tragedy turned into a comedy, to the satisfaction of all. I will briefly relate the facts.

When we arrived at the first village, the Cossacks declared that the horses were thirsty, and that a halt was therefore necessary. They all dismounted and hurried into the wayside inn, leaving me alone with the horses. But as I could see neither well nor bucket, I could do nothing for the poor beasts. After a while the men returned, and there was no mistaking the state of [115] affairs. If the horses had had no water, the men had found plenty to drink. Presently we came to another village, and the same thing occurred there, only this time they did not trouble to invent any excuse, and never mentioned the thirsty horses. I need hardly say that after each halt the conversation waxed more animated, and the horses were pushed on more furiously. After the third stoppage the situation became alarming. They no longer talked, but all shouted at once, the clatter of their voices being intermixed with snatches of

popular songs, while the trot of the horses changed to a gallop.

I felt desperate, for I knew that I was quite powerless against the inveterate national custom of these children of nature. They continued, however, to behave well towards me, and treated me with the greatest respect. They were only very hilarious, that was all. They shouted and sang and waved their red kerchiefs as we sped along.

The last hamlet passed, and there being no further chance of obtaining refreshment until Mukden station was reached, a steeplechase was proposed across country, to the station. I cannot tell what distance we thus covered, for the speed at which we went exceeded all my previous experiences. The race over the uneven ground caused me many different sensations. Across the [116]
plain it was rapid and exciting, and I fully participated in the exhilaration of these wild children. Across the cultivated ground it was pleasant enough for those on horseback, but to me, in my *tarantass*, it was like being on the rack. But it was in crossing the maize-fields that I suffered most.

The race increased in speed. Horses and men completely lost their heads, and it was no longer a question of restraining them. The horses took the bits between their teeth and simply went like the wind. We seemed to fly over the ditches and tore through the reed hedges. Some of the animals slipped and the men fell head over heels in the mud, while guns and swords described glittering circles in the air. Finally, in trying to clear a deep creek, one of the wheels of the provision-cart came off, and all the contents were scattered. Then, to my joy, I saw looming in the distance, like a haven of refuge, the miserable shed which is called Mukden station.

I lay down at the bottom of the *tarantass*, with a feeling of deliverance near at hand. I must explain that my straw seat had fallen to pieces at an early stage of our mad race, so that the only way to remain in the *tarantass* was by lying down at the bottom and holding on to the sides. But even this comparative degree of comfort was extended to me for only a short time, for suddenly I [117]
received a terrible shock; there was a grinding noise produced by the carriage, followed by an exclamation from the driver, unintelligible to me; the sound of horses struggling in the water; and finally I felt an icy wave dashing over me. I thought I was drowning, and instinctively raised myself in my basket. We were in the middle of a river which had overflowed its banks! My little horses were half submerged. Some of the Cossacks were still in the saddle; others were wading through the muddy stream up to their waists in water. They were all in a state of great excitement, talking and shouting, but all quite cheerful. Some were washing their scratches, others struggling desperately to rescue their belongings, which were floating away on the stream, and the horses, at last, with supreme contentment, were able to drink their fill of the water so long withheld and so fully deserved.

The steeplechase under ordinary conditions may be a noble sport and may have its charm and many dangers, but it cannot be compared with such a cross-country race in a *tarantass*, escorted by a detachment of Cossacks. And yet, in spite of all, I am indebted to these hardy companions, for their mad escapade and their wild merriment saved our lives. Whilst in full career, with horses neighing, Cossacks shouting, and swords flashing, we became aware of a body of men, who had presumably been hiding in the bushes, escaping [118]
towards the distant woods. Evidently they thought we were pursuing them, and they fled in disorder. I learnt afterwards that it was a band of those Chunchuses who have been the terror of the district for many years, and very likely the same I met on my previous journey. Not long ago they kidnapped Mr. Wetzel, the director of the East China Railway, whose adventures have been described at length in the newspapers. He was carried into the interior, underwent the most terrible tortures, and was on the verge of losing his mind when his ransom arrived.

If my Cossacks had not indulged in that steeplechase my journey might have had a tragic ending. Thanks to our furious riding, we startled the band lying in wait for a prey; but if they had seen us quietly proceeding like ordinary travellers along the highroad, they would undoubtedly have attacked us; and I will therefore conclude with the well-known proverb: "All's well that ends well."

V [119]

PORT ARTHUR, DALNY, NIU-CHWANG, TIEN-TSIN

The country between Mukden and Port Arthur is the granary of Manchuria. Rice, corn, and maize grow in great profusion, and there are from thirty-five

to forty different kinds of peas and beans. Chinese agriculture is based on excellent principles. The system of irrigation and the methods of working fully deserve our attention; but the plentiful harvests are chiefly due to the remarkable mode of manuring. The same piece of ground can yield several crops in rotation in one year. It would seem that the land never requires to lie fallow.

As I watched the Chinese farmers and labourers, I was vividly struck by the contrast between this peace-loving, agricultural population, and the armed Cossacks who lined the route. The nearer we came to the coast the more numerous they seemed to become, and there were more and larger barracks also. Yet the Russian military and the Chinese farmers appear to live on friendly terms with one another. I frequently saw Russian soldiers and Chinamen sitting at the same table, merrily talking together, and I even [120] noticed signs of Russification among the natives, for many pigtails were twisted up and hidden under a Russian *schapka*. They eat the same food with an equally good appetite, and appear to have many tastes in common. If, during the Boxer agitation, the Russian troops behaved with exceptional cruelty towards the natives, it is certain that at present there is a perfect understanding between them. And after all they belong more or less to the same stock; their historic past is very similar, and they both live the same primitive life.

* * * * *

I was now nearing the end of my journey, and although the progress had been slow it had been full of incidents. The last obstacle on the route we encountered at Liaoyang, where a bridge had been swept away. I was prepared for this delay, for some weeks before, the station-master at Harbin had given me a thrilling account of the accident. I remember wondering at the time whether he was exaggerating and trying to dissuade me from penetrating further into the interior of Manchuria; but when I saw the state of affairs at Liaoyang I realized that his story had been perfectly true. The scene before me was one of general confusion. Thousands of Russian soldiers and Chinese coolies were engaged in carting sand, cutting poles, and fixing rails; all talking and shouting at once in different tongues and dialects. [121]

It was a veritable babel. About a thousand men were occupied in constructing a bridge of stone and iron. A few thousand others were throwing up sandbanks to check the water, while another gang of workmen was making a pontoon. We stopped several hours and no one seemed to know how or when we should get across. But the scene was so exciting, and gave me such an excellent opportunity of watching the Chinese at work, that I did not grudge the delay. At last some engineering officers suggested dividing the train and trying to take it across by the pontoon in portions.

How it was exactly managed I am unable to describe, for what with the jerking and bumping of my carriage, and the whistling, creaking, and groaning of the engine over the swaying pontoon, I had no chance of making observations. And when the temporary rails over the pontoon became submerged and the waves dashed up to my carriage door, I followed the example of the stoker and the guard and stood on the step, barefooted, ready to jump and attempt to swim to land if the whole tottering structure should collapse and disappear under the waves.

Thus ended my journey across Manchuria. Many delays and excursions into the interior had retarded my progress, but at last I arrived safe and sound at Port Arthur, where I remained two days, including a visit to Dalny. Port [122] Arthur, as I saw it, was merely a military station on the extremity of the peninsula of Liaotung. At one time it was the chief naval arsenal of China, but after the war with Japan its defences and military works were destroyed. When, in 1898, the Russians leased the two places, Port Arthur and Dalny, they made the former into a great military and naval fortress. It was placed under the control of an admiral who had chief command over the troops and the maritime forces. He had under him a double staff of naval and military officers, comprising the commander of the port, the chiefs of the naval staff, the riflemen, the artillery, the engineering service, and the intelligence department, the harbour master, the chief of the torpedo division, the first assistant to the commander of the port, the second assistant, the commander of the commercial port, the ordnance officers of the Governor-General, the civil governor, the diplomatic agent, the secretary of finances, and the chief of the police.

Port Arthur undoubtedly has a very complicated form of administration, and at first it was suggested that it should be made into an eastern Kronstadt, or the Asiatic citadel of the great empire. The place itself and the surrounding hills are full of fortifications, and I have been assured over and over again

that it would be perfectly impossible to take it by sea. It is one long line of arsenals, torpedo depots, barracks, and encampments. The fact that Port Arthur is essentially a military port is not disguised; there are only a few buildings, including those of the East China Railway Company and the Russo-Chinese Bank, which do not openly serve military purposes. [123]

A new town has grown up on the opposite side to satisfy the demands of trade. This is called Dalny, and is situated on the bay of Talienwan, to the north-west of Port Arthur. The territory, like that of Port Arthur, was given in lease by China, and it is intended to make this into a free port connected by the Manchurian Railway with Vladivostok, Moscow, the Black Sea, and the Baltic. It might in time become the great commercial centre of the extreme East. The port is about six miles long and very deep, and offers exceptional facilities for navigation.

Dalny in its present condition has a somewhat paradoxical aspect. Palaces emerge from the sands, public monuments fill the deserted squares, avenues and boulevards are traced out on the shore. Dalny is the hope of the partisans of Russian commerce and progress, while Port Arthur is the pride of the military party. The development of the former is encouraged by the energetic efforts of Mr. White; the latter finds a powerful protector in General Kuropatkin. [124]

GENERAL KUROPATKIN
[To face page 124]

Port Arthur impressed me greatly on account of its strategic importance, but what I saw of Dalny did not inspire me with much confidence as to its commercial future. During my visit I saw all that has been accomplished since 1898, and certainly, although many things are still far from perfect, and the mistakes made are very palpable even to the uninitiated, one cannot fail to recognize that much has been done in so short a time. But if we knew at what cost all this has been accomplished, our admiration would probably be considerably reduced.

No boat for Taku was likely to start for some time, so I decided to continue

my journey to Pekin by rail. As far as Ying-tsé we travelled over the main Manchurian line, whence a branch line runs to Niu-chwang. This is the most northerly port of the Yellow Empire open to foreign trade. It is situated at a distance of thirteen miles from the mouth of the river Liao, which discharges into the gulf of Liaotung, a continuation of the gulf of Pechili. The railway line, which brings Niu-chwang into direct communication with Siberia and Pekin, was just finished. Branch lines in the direction of Tien-tsin had existed before this, but they were destroyed in the late Boxer troubles. To give my readers a somewhat accurate idea of the importance of this town I will try to quote from the Official journals:— [125]

The town of Niu-chwang is rapidly growing in importance since the construction of the railway. The East China Railway between Port Arthur, Dalny, and the junction of Ta-shik-chia, whence a branch line runs to Port Arthur, was finished as far as Mukden towards the close of 1899. The Chinese Imperial line was also completed then. It was subsequently decided to deal systematically with the mineral resources of Manchuria, owing to the East China line having laid open the coal-mines at Mochi-Shan and Z'mershan near the Liaoyang, and at Wafungtien in the south of the Liaotung peninsula. The railway line runs right along these rich exploitations. An unprecedented commercial activity has accompanied these developments, resulting in an increase of 49 per cent. for 1898.

The chief articles of trade for this port are beans and oil-cake, with an export of 2,241,053 piculs of the former and 2,289,544 piculs of the latter in 1899. The net quantity of opium imported in 1898 was 92 piculs as against 2453 in 1879. The importation of opium has been steadily declining in the course of the last few years, the poppy seed being largely and successfully cultivated in Manchuria. The total figure of the trade of this port for 1899 has risen to 48,357,623 taels as against 32,441,315 in 1898. The port figured conspicuously in the disturbances of 1900; the Chinese troops which attacked the town being defeated by the Russians, who took possession of the port. Trade was necessarily at a standstill in 1900. [126]

Niu-chwang was a revelation to me. I saw for the first time a real Chinese town in all its immensity. It appeared an inextricable labyrinth of streets and alleys overflowing with people. All our Western ideas are reversed here; indeed, buildings and people alike seemed to belong not only to another hemisphere, but to another planet. The lines are so strange, the colours so brilliant, the sounds so sharp, that one is at once deafened, blinded, and astonished. Beyond the city, on the solid earth, is the floating town on the river. The Liao at this point, little more than half a mile wide, is literally covered with vessels of every description.

It is a thronged mass of large merchant ships, smaller boats, and wooden junks. Each boat is a home, in which always one, and often several, families are housed with all their belongings: children, pigs, and poultry filling the decks. Those of the better classes who can afford it have regular summer-houses on the river, built like pagodas, elaborately furnished and surrounded by artificial gardens with dwarf trees in costly pots. In between this confusion of boats, narrow passages and regular canals are left free on the water, in which graceful canoes are seen gliding and winding about like gondolas. Both on land and water, the crowds of human beings, and exuberance of life, are overwhelming. [127]

One feels ill at ease and lost among this surging mass of humanity. The narrowest streets and the largest squares, the courts and the floating houses, all teem with life; and, in contrast with the sleepy, passive multitudes of India, all are active here, from the youngest to the oldest. All seem intent on their business, all appear to have some strenuous end in view. The capacity for work which this race possesses manifests itself everywhere from morning till night. Chinese strength and vitality are here seen in all their original energy and force.

Niu-chwang is an important place even now, but it has every possibility and likelihood of becoming one of the great commercial centres of the future. Its international trade has been hitherto hindered by the fact that the river is frozen for three months in the year, but since the completion of the Tien-tsin line the town has become easy of access by land. A railway bridge over the Liao is projected, and when this is built the train will run directly from Pekin to St. Petersburg. At present travellers have to cross the river in wooden junks, and continue their journey by the Chinese trains. [128]

In the centre of the commercial town is the settlement of the Catholic Mission. Buried in a maze of tortuous streets, it is almost lost sight of in the bustle and noise of the adjacent fair, giving the impression of some Oriental bazaar. The little church, and the few small houses belonging to the Mission,

are enclosed as far as possible by a whitewashed garden wall, which is but a poor protection in case of siege or serious disorders. If the populace were to show signs of hostility that ruinous wall would not hold out long against the mob; but they who join the Mission, who devote their lives to deeds of charity, who feed the starving, and care for the destitute, put their trust in a defence stronger than the strongest towers of this world. From the time that the missionary leaves his native land and offers his life to the Almighty, he spends his days in a constant state of uncertainty. From the moment that he sets foot on the shores of the Yellow Empire dangers of all kinds crowd around him. These martyrs to duty are continuously exposed to open and secret persecution, terrible epidemics, privations, and hardships of all kinds. Yet in spite of manifold trials and dangers, young priests and nuns who have only just taken the vow, go over to the Far East, happy and full of zeal, ready to [129] devote their lives to the noble spiritual work.

On the day of my departure from Niu-chwang I had the good fortune to witness an historical event, the official transfer of the railway to the Chinese Governor-General of Manchuria. Since the last war the route between Niu-chwang and Hankau-chwang had been under the military control of Russia, while the other route between the latter town and Tien-tsin was held by British troops. There were great festivities in honour of the day. The station buildings were decorated with all the pomp of Asiatic taste; everywhere Venetian masts, floating banners, Chinese inscriptions, and Russian trophies, announced the great event, with laurel garlands symbolizing victory, and olive branches speaking of eternal peace. Ambitious mandarins and gold-bedizened Russian generals exchanged salutes and bows in sign of mutual respect. No doubt it was a case of "live and let live," for all appeared quite satisfied.

An interminable programme marked the order of the festivities, and if I had had an aptitude for journalism I could have written columns upon "The Official Transfer of the East China Railway Line by Russia to China." I could have indulged in lengthy descriptions of the receptions, presentations, floral offerings, banquets, with streams of champagne, and endless flow of toasts. But the best correspondent could not have said more than I have done here [130] upon the principal event, the actual transfer of the railway. He could not have pierced, any more than I could, that thick veil which hides from us the knowledge as to whether that railway has actually become Chinese property or not.

The country between Niu-chwang and Hankau-chwang is at first flat and uninteresting, although rich in vegetation. Nearer to the sea it becomes more varied, and in parts it is quite picturesque. Some of the bays of the Yellow Sea —which, by the by, is intensely blue just there—resemble the fjords and are dominated by craggy rocks. We advanced slowly and stopped at many stations, the Russian soldiers still always predominating over the native contingent.

It was late in the evening, when our train, with much noise, passed through the breach in the famous wall, by which I was greatly impressed. That enormous mass of masonry, one of the most colossal structures ever made by human hands, is here seen to the best advantage, skirting the steep inclines of the mountains, ascending to the tops of the highest peaks, or descending into the plains to lose itself finally in the unfathomable depths of the sea.

It is indeed a wonderful sight, and, like that other gigantic human undertaking, the Pyramids of Egypt, this wall is interesting, not only for its own sake, but also as marking a stage in the history of the civilization of the [131] world. I gazed at it, and looked at our powerful engine, with its long train of American-built carriages, as it passed through the breach, and in that one glance there was much to comprehend both from the past and for the future of Asia.

At Hankau-chwang a surprise awaited me. The English troops had finished their mission, and on this momentous occasion the commander gave a dinner. The guests were assembled in the little yamen near the station. The dining-room was tastefully draped and hung with pretty watercolours. Books and knick-knacks lay about, and the table was covered with an immaculately white cloth and set out with a dinner-service of severe simplicity, but scrupulously clean. A simple abode it was, but every detail of it would bring to temporary inmates the pleasant recollections of the comforts and the charm of their English homes.

Another interesting stage of my journey was from Hankau-chwang to Tien-tsin, through one of the richest districts of China. Our train stopped frequently, for we touched many important towns. Trade is brisk in this part. In places the ground was cultivated like a vegetable garden, but the real

wealth of the district lies in its coal-mines. In the way of structural curiosities the two chief sites on the road were the country house of Li Hung-Chang and Fort Taku. [132]

The late Viceroy and great politician had also been a clever financier. His weakness for speculation and commercial enterprise was well-known throughout the country. The coal-mines of this neighbourhood were partly his property. He not only looked well after his personal affairs, but also took care to inquire into the financial position of those with whom he dealt. Whenever he entertained a foreign diplomatist, or granted an interview to the director of some international company, or even the head of some ordinary business house desirous of gaining information about special concessions or privileges, the first question the Viceroy asked invariably was: "What is he worth? How rich is he?" The success of a petition depended, so I was told, to a great extent upon the sum of money poured into the coffers of the statesman as a preliminary investment.

Fort Taku does not need to be described at length. It has played a conspicuous part in the history of the last five-and-twenty years—in the struggles between the West and the East, the White and the Yellow races. It has been several times bombarded, destroyed, and rebuilt. At present it is again in ruins.

There is now a new commercial town in course of erection. In the place of the old-world style, modern colonists have introduced a somewhat vulgar and [133] insipid form of architecture, which possesses neither the picturesqueness of the old Chinese towns nor the advantages of our European cities. The colony is as yet in its infancy, and only counts a few rows of small houses and some miserable shops.

The last stopping-place on my journey was Tien-tsin. Situated on the crossing of the Peiho and the Grand Canal, this is one of the most important towns of China. It has a population of over a million, and is divided into the city proper, the foreign confines, and the suburbs. The old part is a perfect specimen of a Chinese town, overpopulated, brilliant, noisy, and dirty; a hustling, bustling crowd of humanity living like bees in a hive. It contains many interesting monuments, although the chief attraction of the city no longer exists, I mean its enclosure, the wall which surrounded a square of four thousand feet. It was pulled down to make room for trade traffic.

The European quarter is very different in character; it has large squares, shady avenues, and beautiful buildings. Each nation represented there has a little colony of its own, with barracks, commercial offices, and consular residences. The English colony, which is close to the French, boasts of the best buildings, has large, well-kept streets, and is guarded by some very fine-looking Sikhs. The large dwelling-houses, the homely bungalows, and the [134] turbaned figures of the tall soldiers, remind one of some Indian cantonment. The Italian and Austrian quarters are on the other side of the canal, and almost lost among the native town. Since the occupation of the Allied Troops the importance of Tien-tsin has grown considerably, and in time it is likely to become a powerful rival to Shanghai as far as international commercial interests are concerned. In fact, it has all the commercial advantages of Shanghai. When we consider that at the time of the Ming dynasty it occupied only a secondary position, its development is the more remarkable. Tien-tsin is about eighty miles distant from Pekin, and lies near the sea; its commercial advantages as the market for export and import trade are therefore evident.

The railway has added another considerable advantage to the many already possessed by Tien-tsin, namely that of bringing it into direct communication with the mainland. Li Hung-Chang, who, in his capacity of Viceroy, resided there for many years, was a strong supporter of the place. Under him it became, not only a large commercial centre, but with the normal schools for the organization of army and navy, other elements were attracted towards the place, and different occupations introduced.

Tien-tsin, in fact, has become the home of the progressive party. Pamphlets, daily papers, literary and political clubs, have propagated the views and ideas [135] of the great Viceroy. It was Li Hung-Chang who started the first coal-pit in the neighbourhood of Tong-shan, about thirty years ago, and the export of coal is making rapid progress. The output amounts at present to nearly three hundred thousand tons. Another local industry of great importance is the production of salt. This is a Government monopoly, and is obtained through the evaporation of sea-water. The salt lies piled up in heaps along the banks of the river. Spirituous liquors are distilled in large quantities and sent into the interior. The exports include wines, furs, skins, bristles, and wood. Export trade, which did not exist five-and-twenty years ago, now reaches a total of about fifteen million taels per annum.

From the time of the first European expedition in 1858, Tien-tsin has been the scene of much fighting and many desperate battles. During the last rebellion the disturbances were greater there than anywhere else, and it was there also that the Boxers, in the beginning of June, 1900, set fire to the Foreign Mission settlements. At first no one seemed to realize the imminence of the danger, and it was not until the second half of the same month, after the bombardment of Taku, that hostilities, attended with all the horrors of war, were seriously commenced. The attack on the European colony, the blockade [136] of the barracks, the destruction of the railway station, and the massacre of the missionaries and Christians, followed each other rapidly. Eye-witnesses have given us graphic descriptions of the atrocities committed during the insurrection. The bravery of the troops, the missionaries, the Christian women, and the children, has excited the admiration of the world. Many ruins still testify to this prolonged siege.

The chief event of my stay in this place was my visit to the Viceregal Palace. If Li Hung-Chang had been a great statesman, his successor was not unworthy of him. Yuan-tsi-Khai and Chan-chi-Tung are the two most prominent men of modern China. Nature has endowed them very differently, but they are alike zealous in their endeavours to rouse China from its apathy. Although the ways and means by which they hope to effect their object are different, the end in view is the same. Chan-chi-Tung is a peace-loving man, an ardent follower of the doctrine of Confucius, and strongly attached to the national principles of morality. He favours reform in undertakings of a purely commercial and industrial nature, in financial transactions; but in intellectual and spiritual questions he is very conservative. In his own province he has made successful attempts at improvement. He has established factories, cotton mills and [137] looms, forges, local railways, and an important arsenal on the Yangtse-kiang.

His adversaries—and he has many, like every one who rises above the common level—accuse him of being an idealist. But in most cases his ideas, practically carried out, have proved to be of very real benefit to his country. He is a deep thinker and a most pleasant and interesting companion. His writings on various political and social questions are fine specimens of human philosophy.

Yuan-tsi-Khai is, on the contrary, before all a man of action, a soldier at heart. He loves to fight his enemies and to press forward without considering the difficulties in the way.

My sojourn at Tien-tsin was of special service to me in obtaining clearer ideas as to the actual conditions of China. I made the acquaintance of many interesting persons, some of whom are the makers of the history of our time. They were not all of the same nationality, nor did they all pursue the same vocation, nor were they all of the same mind; their opinions also were widely different. But it is to a certain extent owing to the antagonism of their views that I was enabled to form some provisional conclusions.

It was on a bright afternoon of the short St. Martin's summer that I accomplished the last twenty-four miles of my long railway journey across the [138] two continents. As I neared my final destination, Pekin, and passed through the flat and barren country I could hardly realize that I had traversed such an enormous distance during the last few months. I tried to recall to mind the different countries I had passed through and their inhabitants, the prosperous towns and the miserable villages I had visited; the centres of civilization and the primitive solitudes.

Then I began to comprehend all I had seen. Much of my previous conceptions of this part of the world had been vague, for the difference between what one imagines and what actually is, is great! One may gather the most reliable information, listen to the most explicit descriptions, or study the best books, but how far all this falls short of personal experience! The best references, the most accurate figures, the most lucid writings, will never produce the same effect as reality, and it is not upon those somewhat abstract notions that our faculties are exercised with the greatest profit. What one feels has even more weight than what one sees, and psychological studies are of greater value than statistics. To know a country, it is the life, the everyday existence, of its inhabitants that we have to study. Life in all its varied expressions, in labour and in rest, in its fundamental principles and its manifold manifestations, this it is which reveals to us the deep source from which the [139] energizing elements flow in diverse directions.

It was growing dark as we neared the end of our journey. On the platforms of the small stations we passed, I saw foreign soldiers belonging to the Allied Forces; here fair Teuton giants, there short, brown *bersaglieri*. And at each succeeding station there was more movement, more confusion, till we reached the metropolis. The sun was setting as we skirted the imperial deer

park. Every moment the light effects increased in beauty. The sombre masses of foliage, framed by the blue lines of the eastern hills, formed an enchanting picture.

Outlines and colours were so unexpected, so strangely blended, that it looked like a painting from the magic brush of some great Chinese master. The forests stood out dark and menacing, as if still sheltering the monsters and dragons of ancient folk-lore, and the hills were like so many pointed sugar-loaves, heaped up by some awful giants.

It was as perfect a Chinese landscape as I could have wished to see, and to crown all, the sun went down in a blaze of light; it was as if fiery darts were being shot across the flaming sky. I have seen many sunsets in the tropics, and in the East, but never anything to equal this. The brightness of it flooded with saffron the clouds of dust always hanging over the capital, and illumined [140] all the million atoms which rise from the Mongolian desert....

At an unexpected turn in the road it seemed as if the golden veil was torn aside to give me a glimpse of the mysterious city. The stage effect was perfect; the curtain might have been drawn by a clever manager's hand to reveal the great Hatamen Gate in all its magnificence. The famous crenellated walls; the lofty towers and proud pagodas, first described by Marco Polo; the heavy bastions, and the marble bridges, were but indistinctly visible, and therefore all the more suggestive and beautiful. In fact, my first impression of Pekin was of a fancy or dream. What the city really looked like was as yet mercifully hidden from me; my imagination could have full play, untrammelled by the disillusions of knowledge and experience. Afterwards I saw things differently, but that first day the great city of the mighty Khan seemed as a mirage to me.

The crumbling citadel of a great nation, nay, of the whole glory of a mighty race, the monument of its art, the Walhalla of its history, shone in the dazzling splendour of the afterglow, like a golden city floating on golden clouds.

VI [141]

PEKIN

I
THE ARRIVAL

It is evening when I arrive in Pekin. The train stops outside the Tartar Wall. Darkness shrouds everything, and the place seems to be deserted. Not even a guard or porter is to be seen. Alongside the embankment a few coolies with gigantic lanterns are waiting for the passengers, and, in quaint procession, with innumerable balloons hanging from long bamboo sticks, are searching for their masters. They all shout, but no one seems to understand them. There is no trace of any vehicles or carriages, and I don't see even a platform. I am standing in the midst of a desert; behind me, some sandhills and a pool are all I can distinguish, and in front, among the crowd of coolies, a tall figure is conspicuous, which approaches, and, by the yellow rays of a pumpkin-like lantern, I recognize an old acquaintance. Here he occupies the position of First Secretary of Legation, and brings me an invitation from his chief. My trunks are taken in charge by an attendant, and we walk towards my new abode, which my friend tells me is close by. [142]

It is explained to me that the present railway station is only a temporary one; only since the occupation by the Allied Forces have trains been able to penetrate as far as the inner wall. They used to have to stop miles away, as no engine was allowed to desecrate the holy city of Pekin. At a short distance from the temporary station is a tunnel-like opening in the wall, and I am informed that it was made for the use of members of the legations and foreign settlement, and has ex-territorial rights granted to it. I pass through the so-called Gate of the Nations full of expectation, for I am most anxious for surprises, which certainly are not wanting.

I hope to see before me a fairy city and scenes like those on the stage; but instead of splendour and glitter I see mist. By the flickering light of a few paraffin lamps I begin to distinguish the famous international quarter, but I feel it would be better if they were not lit, for they only disclose ruins and débris. Among heaps of bricks and mortar we reach the edge of a ditch of stagnant water, which, as my companion informs me, not without some pride, is the so-called Canal of Jade. It is a magnificent name, which I have known for a long time. If I have pictured it to myself as different from what it is in

reality, it is not the fault of an exaggerated fancy; and as we stumble along in the lane skirting the ditch—I beg its pardon; on the banks of the waters of [143] Jasper—I still cannot perceive anything else but garden walls. I don't even see the famous Jade Stream, for though long ago there may have been water in the ditch, there are now only puddles here and there. But if I can't see, I smell all the more; smell all kinds of unimaginable and imaginable odours.

At last we approach a gate with a martial sentry in front of it. The password is given, and we are at last at home. In the courtyard, on the edge of the grass, are a number of lanterns. Large and yellow, they look like melons. The effect is charming, but as they give but very indifferent light, I can only distinctly discern some pillars and arches. Now we pass through some open halls and reach a garden-like square. To the right and left from the windows of small summer-houses the light of candles filters through. In front is another building in the same style, a few columns supporting a heavy roof; the columns are of red lacquered wood, and the tiles of emerald-green. Beyond this is another garden, and lastly the legation proper. The door is open and the hall ablaze with light. On the broad staircase are servants in red—pigtailed Chinese, dressed after the fashion of their country. They salute us, bowing low, with their hands folded.

The scene is interesting, the setting fine. By the light of the lanterns the roof [144] of the old yamen appears even more gabled than it is, and its eaves the more bizarre than in reality. At last I have before me a truly Chinese picture, thousands of years old, artistic and brilliant. But the scene quickly changes as we go inside, and from the past we come to the present, from Oriental surroundings we step into a Western interior.

* * * * *

The rays of the rising sun wake me as they burst brightly into the courtyard of the yamen, filtering, rosy-coloured, through the embrasures of the crenellated walls.

My quarters have a verandah looking upon a small courtyard, the pillars of which are of ruby lacquer, its roof of emerald glaze. In the yard are many flowers planted in old china vases. Four cedars, ages old, stand in the corners, and their branches form a lovely shady tent under the canopy of a morning sky. The branches of the old trees and the eaves are swarming with birds which awake with me, and merry with their songs.

On opening my eyes I scarcely know whether I am awake or still dreaming. It takes me some time to realize my surroundings. In the little garden some one is noiselessly crossing the grass in paper shoes. He wears a light blue kaftan over a white tunic, and the colours harmonize well, for this slate-blue suits his [145] yellow complexion, and a long pigtail hangs down his back.

This is reality. I am indeed in the Flowery Land. I am actually awaking in Pekin.

II
THE FIRST DRIVE THROUGH THE TOWN

It is eight o'clock in the evening. I have just returned from Pei-tang; it takes nearly an hour to come from there. And what a road! Imagine a brilliant stereoscope with living figures rushing forward upon you as you gaze—a gigantic kaleidoscope in which, among multitudinous and dazzling fragments a heap of ants are busy. And if we look at these through a magnifying glass, the effect will be somewhat similar to one's first impression of Pekin. Bedlam, uproar, chaos; and all this half concealed by a veil of whirling dust. It would be difficult to recount what I have seen, and even more difficult to explain what my sensations were. I was amazed by the brilliant spectacle.

It is early in the morning when I set out on my exploring expedition. From the street in which the legation stands we suddenly turn into the grand Imperial Square. The yellow-roofed palace in front of us may be called the focus of Pekin, nay, the centre of the whole Yellow Empire, for every road leads thither.

The principal street is broad, crossing the wall of the Tartar city. A few miles [146] farther to the south it strikes the Chinese town, and through gates like triumphal arches, and over bridges, across moats, and skirting bastions, reaches the open. This is the perspective before me: my eyes penetrate in a straight line, almost any distance, to the sea at the farthermost point of the realm, but the crowd is so dense and the traffic so thick, and there are such clouds of dust, that we can hardly see what is going on within a yard of us. Caravans of camels, people on horseback, carriages, and carts follow each other incessantly. Every moment we narrowly escape a collision. It is a wonder that numbers of the shaky little vehicles do not get smashed, for there

is a continuous stream of fresh phantom-like objects.

The palace is surrounded by a high wall painted red, and roofed with yellow tiles. Red likewise is the large gate studded with yellow nails. In fact, there are three gates side by side—in China everything is threefold—but they are all closed. In front of them are sentries, for the palace is sacred, and entrance into it means decapitation. On the other side are small shops and stores, in the windows of which are exhibited motley wares, while the façades are carved with a hundred and one very quaint pictures. What they represent I am at a loss to know.

We escape into one of the many side streets. It is narrow, dark, and seems to [147]
be endless, running along between the houses like a river, to right and left.

Now we reach something like a desert. I cannot call it a common, because there is no grass; there is nothing but dust and dirt. Farther away are some ruins, and still farther a red wall can be seen. It is again the wall of the Imperial city, that gigantic structure that follows us wherever we go. It is either in front of us or behind us, on one side or the other. Beyond the wilderness are rows of houses. Behind huge walls the tops of some shadowy trees are visible now and again, the gabled roofs of yamens and a few flagstaffs.

A little more wilderness is followed by a few rows of houses, and beyond them come some streets; shops crowded with customers, and, lastly, the ubiquitous red wall again.

In the middle of the wall is the gate, a wooden structure, with gabled towers and aggressively golden dragons painted on it, and little bells hanging down from the corners. Crowds are streaming from the archway; sunburnt coolies endeavouring to get their light carts over the marble steps. Now we face the broad Imperial street. The shops on both sides are still more carved and gilt than the others. The gables are like umbrellas blown inside out by the wind,
and the edges do not lack ornament, being decorated with carved tassels and [148]
lace and every conceivable trimming. The signboards are well worth studying. Some are of wood, others of metal, cast iron, or paper; but all display glaring colours. No wonder they attract the attention of passersby. The shoemakers' wooden signs are of unusually large size, showing the latest fashion in foot-gear either painted or carved, and apparently floating in the clouds or in higher spheres. The sign is generally suspended in the claws of some grinning monster or lion by a chain that is fastened to the eaves. Next in point of merit are the signs of the Pekin apothecaries, who in this respect decidedly excel us; and the pawnbrokers' symbols deserve even more attention than the others from an artistic point of view.

The pavement is occupied by stalls and booths, their only protection from the sun being a sheet of canvas fixed to a pole. The wares are spread out on the ground. Street kitchens abound, consisting of little earthenware stoves or small iron grates which are used for cooking. Half-naked workmen are huddled round the tables, which are covered with little mugs about as large as teacups, each containing something different, hundreds of delicacies with sauces both bitter and sweet at once. Long thin sticks are used instead of forks, and the skill shown in the handling of them is simply astonishing. I have
never seen people eat more daintily. A dinner of eight or nine courses can be [149]
had for about one farthing. With their chopsticks they pick out some of the solid dishes, seasoning them with four or five different sauces. The Chinese are the greatest gourmets in the world, for I notice that the ordinary meals of labourers are more complicated than the choicest menu of a French chef.

The end of the street is enclosed by a wall—the usual red wall—the inner defence of the Imperial city. Here stands the Western Gate, and the monumental quarter, with yellow tiled roofs, begins. In front of it is a sentry, the entrance to the garden being strictly prohibited.

My way is not in that direction, but to the north. In the centre of the park, which has recently been replanted, stands the cathedral, finished a few months ago.

The work of the Chinese Missions is written on one of the latest pages of universal history. The events of two years ago are still vividly impressed on our memories, when the few hundred Christians who had sought refuge at the Mission in Pei-tang seemed to be doomed. No one believed that they could stand the siege of the frantic mob, for, except a garden wall a few feet high, there were no means of defence. It was due to the most resolute courage and valour that the little flock did not surrender. Old and young, priests and
soldiers, fought side by side in the breaches from morning to night. [150]

During the weary weeks of the siege many fell under arms, and many more

among the orphans and sisters of charity died of exhaustion.

The recent graves forming the small cemetery in the inner garden were dug to receive the bodies of these new martyrs.

But, after all, Christian faith triumphed over pagan hatred, and finally the hour of deliverance struck. And today Pei-tang and its cathedral stand finer and stronger than before, to the benefit of humanity and the glory of God.

III
THE NEW LEGATION QUARTERS

It is now a month since I arrived in Pekin. The autumn has passed quickly—and October is the finest time during the whole year in the yellow capital, for the weather is mild and clear. In the morning it is cool, and frosts are not rare at night. But later in the day the skies are cloudless, and the sun is often as hot as in summer. As regards climate—which, by the way, is an important factor in the life and progress of a nation—Pekin is a bundle of contrasts. The summer is hot, the winter extremely cold, the spring wet, and the autumn very dry. Since my arrival there has been no rain, but occasionally it has become cloudy, and as dark as if the sun were eclipsed. The wind, when blowing from the north, sweeps sand from the desert of Gobi before it, and [151] shrouds the whole town in a veil as it were. This sand spreads over the whole atmosphere like a dense fog, through which one can hardly see a yard's distance. It penetrates windows, doors, even cracks, and buries the whole district like a stream of lava. After a sand-storm the sky clears, and becomes bluer than the blue dome of the Mediterranean, smooth and translucent as though cut out of a gigantic sapphire. This contrast between dull and bright weather seems to create two distinct towns; in the one all is gloomy, in the other all is bright. That is the reason why those who have described Pekin have either found everything sombre, or have looked upon it through rosy spectacles. The truth lies between the two extremes. I go so far as to say that each is correct—but only relatively.

The traveller who would describe Pekin ought to make daily notes of what he has seen and heard when he sees and hears it, and use light and shade as an artist on his canvas. He who adopts this method will be more successful than those who merely restrict themselves either to recording salient points, or matters of historical importance, or to advocating some political idea.

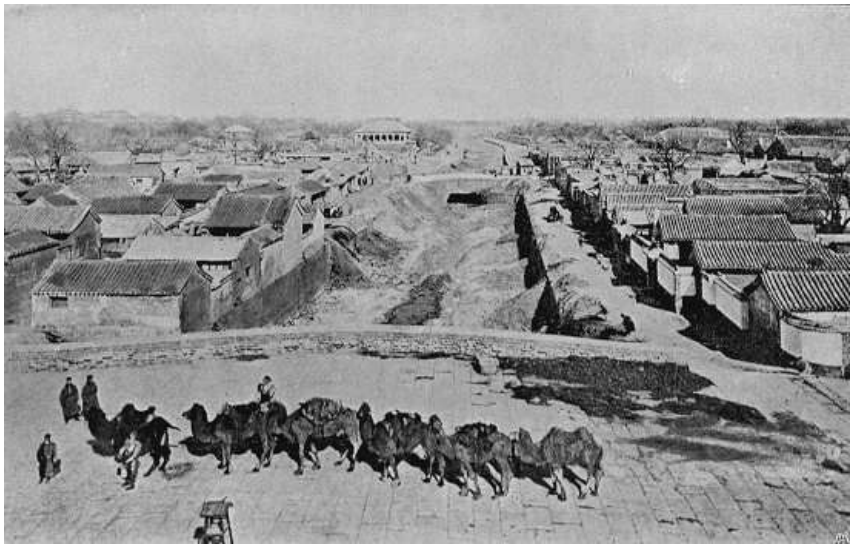
The longer I live within the walls of Pekin the more am I convinced that, in spite of her decadent condition, she is yet full of vitality and, like [152] Constantinople, embodies a national ideal.

In the afternoon I stroll over to the international area and pay a visit to all the legations. My amiable guide, who was here during the siege, when so many of the defenders perished, can supply information as to many dark episodes of the Boxer rebellion, and shows me where the most serious attacks were made, how they bombarded the legations from the city wall over there, how they used to throw blazing torches on to the roofs of these houses, and how they tried to blow up that quarter.

Looking at the place now, it seems incredible that the garrison—a mere handful—should have been able to withstand the frenzied crowd; but one must not forget that it was a mob, not a disciplined army.

As to the French and English legations, the former was reduced nearly to ruins, while the latter suffered comparatively little damage, but lost more lives.

The so-called European quarter is a large area of about a mile and a half square, lying between the Imperial city and the Tartar wall, and crossed by the Rue des Legations.



THE LEGATION QUARTER
"Long rows of caravans coming from the western frontier and Tibet"
[To face page 152]

I start on my round at the Legation Yamen. In front of the royal palace on the right are the new American barracks, before the gates of which a number of soldiers of every nationality are lounging. Opposite is the International [153] Hospital, a two-storeyed building painted light blue; an uglier erection I have never seen, but I am pleased to find the interior arrangements excellent.

The Dutch and American legations came next, adjoining each other, as do also the Russian and English, but of these only the garden walls are visible. Architecturally the American legation is decidedly unattractive, and therefore it does not matter much that it is hidden from view, but the Russian and English legations are typical Chinese dwellings. The architecture of the latter is interesting, for the house itself belonged to one of the Imperial princes, and was built in a style worthy of his rank. On the opposite bank of the canal the Italian and Japanese concessions form a square. A new wall has been built quite recently, and is fortified at the corner by a turret. The German legation is on the other side of the Rue des Legations. The barracks have just been completed, and if they were built for vindictive reasons, Germany has more than attained her end, so hideous are they. Built in Gothic style, they are the most conspicuous of all, and utterly destroy the harmony of the Oriental forms around them. The Austro-Hungarian legation is still in course of erection, in the style of a villa with porticoes; its chief merit lies in its simplicity, but it would certainly have harmonized better with its [154] surroundings had the architect adhered to the style of the old yamens. Though the walls and slender pillars may appeal to the æsthete, it reminds one of a castle of cards, which will easily collapse in future troubles.

The series of legations is closed by the Belgian. The Russo-Chinese and Shanghai Banks are also in the Rue des Legations, the former supported by Russian, the latter by English capital. Their operations spread far and wide.

Such are the main features of the so-called international territory, that famous and historic spot, the theatre of the recent Chinese troubles. Every inch of it was most gallantly defended by its feeble garrison, day and night, for many months. These heroes were decimated by the bullet, sickness, or famine.

The great distance between Europe and China was probably the reason why the outer world knew so little of the serious nature of the siege, and the isolation of the legations made matters worse.

At the time of my visit it was barely two years since it all happened, but, during that short time, a new city had arisen on the ruins of the European concession. To get a better view I ascend a bastion, and wherever I look busy workmen meet my eyes. The Powers seem to be vying with each other; one patronizes gables, another prefers towers, or adorns its walls with bastions; [155] but all is with the view of overshadowing their neighbours. My eye was at first offended by the artistic shortcomings of these buildings, but now it is their practical defects that are conspicuous. It looks as if the oft-quoted and melancholy chaos which followed the victory of the Powers has found visible expression in this new quarter. There seems to be neither uniformity of plan nor advantage of position.

But this is not the only weak point of the Treaty of Chefoo. Its provisions fixed the war indemnity, established commercial treaties of dubious worth, and

made a few concessions valuable only for the moment, and this at a time when the Powers were absolute masters and in a position to dictate reforms, not only of local and temporary importance, but of universal, historical, and moral value.

The Boxer movement of 1900 came as a great surprise, at any rate to the majority of the Powers, and during the outbreak the sole aim of some of the legations seemed to be to secure their own advantage and defeat the aspirations of the rest. This might partly explain how the most guilty persons escaped punishment, and the old state of affairs in China soon returned.

The foreign ministers came back and occupied their new quarters, protected by thicker walls, which the Boxers would have more difficulty in pulling down. [156] I do not know whether I ought to take all I was told about these fortifications seriously, but the garden walls seemed to have been built in the belief that they were indestructible. A few hundred soldiers are kept here by the respective Powers to protect their subjects in case of war. They might suffice in the event of a street riot, but if this nation of four hundred millions should some day determine to act in unison, these walls and the ornamental sentries would, I am afraid, make a very poor defence. In fact, it is hardly to be believed that, if China were once more to attack the European legations, she would employ a mob for the purpose. It is more likely that she will wait until her army is reorganized and armed with modern rifles and Krupp guns.

The new quarter exhibits the same defects as the old. The walls, indeed, are a little higher and the barracks have additional wings, but they remain isolated as before.

It is always a difficult task to throw up defensive works within a city—even the value of the most efficient is questionable; but, if these precautionary measures were absolutely needful, it would certainly have been better to enclose the entire European quarter with a stronger common wall, as is the case with the Imperial city. This would have made it possible for the garrisons [157] of the legations to defend any point attacked conjointly. And it would have had the further advantage that a really pretty, shady town would have been built in the Anglo-Indian style, amongst earthworks planted with trees, instead of a number of insanitary separate walled prisons.

Or would it not have been better to build the European town outside the city gate, between the canal and the railway, where the movement of Pekin is least felt? Neither money nor concessions were wanting, and, both for hygienic and strategical reasons, it would have been far better. The air is purer there, and, in the event of danger, the chances of escape or of obtaining assistance from without are far greater.

The present European quarter in Pekin reminds one of a town which has been rebuilt, after violent earthquakes, on the same spot and in the same way, on that most unsubstantial foundation—chance.

IV
THE TARTAR CITY

The outward appearance of the city, with the exception of the European quarter, is the same as of yore. The ground plan of Pekin is very regular, and is formed of two squares, one the Tartar, the other the Chinese town, each surrounded by a separate wall, with a total number of thirteen gates, with [158] gigantic double-roofed towers.

The centre is occupied by the Imperial city, within which is the Purple or Forbidden City, and inside this we come at last to the Emperor's palaces, private mansions, villas, tea-houses, and temples. The Imperial Palace is itself intersected by gardens, lakes, and streams, and looks more like a city than a palace, nay, like a miniature picture of this whole-walled country.

ENTRANCE TO THE FORBIDDEN CITY
"The centre of this marvellous maze is the Emperor's sanctuary"
[To face page 158]

From the large gate a broad street leads through the Imperial and Tartar towns to the great Southern Gate, one of the strangest thoroughfares in the world. The innermost wall is set in a square of broad moats. Four arched marble bridges lead to the four gates. The jagged wall, the pagoda-like towers of the bastions, the arches of the bridges, all are decorated with finely carved dragons, as rigidly prescribed by law. Walls, moats, towers, and palaces, are repeated in all parts of the gigantic palace; the walls of all buildings being painted red. The shape of the yellow-tiled roofs is that of booths. Everything is planned in accordance with traditions thousands of years old. The threshold must not be larger than that which Confucius crossed, nor must the door be wider than the length of the great teacher's arms.

Every detail of the dwelling, to the minutest ornament, has some symbolic or mythical significance; for instance, at the entrance one never fails to find the [159]
wall which tradition demands to protect the peaceful inhabitants from evil spirits, while the ceiling of the house must not be higher than any of the goblins would care to ascend.

In the same way the trimming or embroidery of the dress of an official or courtier has its particular meaning. This likewise applies to private individuals, and the innermost chambers of their homes, simply because it is required by law.

It is this rigid system that makes China appear so uniform, at any rate outwardly. This same system, too, gives her her great interest from a psychological point of view.

There is hardly any nation or people, throughout the whole history of civilization, whose life has been so profoundly and lastingly influenced by doctrine as the population of the Yellow Empire has been by the teachings of Confucius. From the celestial altar (representing the centre of the universe), where only the Son of Heaven may worship his Father, down to each separate temple, yamen, and stone of sacrifice, everything expresses one and the same ethical idea. It is this gigantic moral system, with its organic life penetrating to the minutest detail, that keeps China strong, even in her present decadence, and makes Pekin, even amidst its ruins, one of the greatest cities [160]
on earth. It is the plan, or let us say conception, which makes us wonder. The metaphysical qualities of this people fascinate us; their ancient traditions are still their strongholds, and their old systems, however degenerate, the source of moral strength. But I hope to deal more fully elsewhere with the psychological side of China. At present I only want to give a hasty sketch of its capital.

One can scarcely imagine a more systematically laid out city than Pekin. The throne is in the centre; thence radiates every street, thither leads every road. It is the focus of the city, the heart of the empire, but—forbidden ground. The man who sets foot therein forfeits his life, so sacred and inviolable is it. Within the second wall the Imperial Family and the Court reside, precious stones set in gold, as the bards say.

Next comes the so-called Imperial city. The extensive Lotus Lake, the long marble bridge, the Maisan hill, the summer residence of the Dowager Empress, are all contained in that vast area—a number of little towns whose wonders would take whole chapters to describe. Each of them has its own mysterious history.

There was a time when, among the clusters of the lotus, more blood flowed than water. Upon one of the islets stands a summer-house, a very homely [161]

building, looking as though its only purpose must be to shelter happiness; but fate made a most gloomy prison of it. There the young Emperor was confined, in anguish, like a criminal, and never knowing whether the morrow would find him alive or lying at the bottom of the lake.

Poor young Emperor! Though he has regained his liberty—if leaving the island for the palace walls can be called freedom—his mind is wrapped in darkness. His youthful dream of making his people happy has vanished for ever. His lofty ideals have crumbled to dust, and of his early counsellors, some are in exile, others in the eternal silence.

The new town residence of the Empress is along the south-eastern wall, and there are other houses enclosed in gardens, all exhibiting the same architectural uniformity—red walls and yellow roofs. The only decoration is the marble staircase with carved dragons. In the adjacent gardens are the quarters of the household staff, and close by the old Foreign Mission and the cathedral. The Mission exchanged those quarters for a fine site farther off, where it is now established.

The *Maisan* (meaning "mount of coal") is an artificial hill in front of the principal Northern Gate. Its five peaks are adorned with fine summer residences of unequalled beauty, and roofed with enamelled tiles, displaying a [162]
number of the porcelain towers so familiar to us from our school-books.

Many versions have come down to posterity as to the origin of the *Maisan*, but I am inclined to think that originally it was erected for the same purpose as the walls round the gates—that of protection against evil spirits. My assumption is rather confirmed by the fact that in the grove extending along the side of the hill stands the great death-chamber, a hall supported on colossal pillars, wherein is deposited the coffin of a deceased Emperor. The funeral procession passes through the large Northern Gate in front of the graves of the Emperors. In China, where everything has a meaning, it would be fallacious to assume that the *Maisan* did not symbolize something, and the uncertainty and mystery only enhance the beauty of the evergreen groves of the place. It is like the Roman Testaccian Hill in this respect, the only interesting feature of whose barrenness lies in its mysterious origin.

TRIUMPHAL ARCH
"The *Maisan* is an artificial wall in front of the principal

The fourth wall is that of the Tartar city, which is almost square, and has altogether ten gates—three to the north, three to the south, two to the east, and two to the west. The wall is about seventeen miles long and fifty feet high, and so wide that a dozen soldiers abreast can ride on it comfortably. At its four corners are four three-storeyed bastions with double-gabled, green- [163]
tiled roofs. Over the gates are towers with similar roofs, and everywhere the same Imperial emblems, the same dragons and ornamentation. Everything bears the stamp of uniformity, embodying one canon of taste and one idea.

One can hardly imagine a grander and more sombre structure than the symmetrical, harmonious walls of Pekin, and the more we see of them the more we are charmed.

The wall of the Chinese town was added to that of the Tartar city to form a parallelogram; it is similar to the former, though somewhat more modest. To the north the three gates of the Tartar city serve as entrance, while on its eastern and western sides are two gates respectively, and to the south is the principal entrance to Pekin. Then come the moats and ditches and the ubiquitous bridges. So any one desiring to approach the throne must pass altogether through five cities, seven gates, and five bridges, and in the Imperial city one must walk through five halls and five courts ere the throne itself is reached.

The conception of all this is as grand as it is masterly. Nowhere is the idea of majesty enhanced so infinitely, and nowhere is power adorned to such an extent as in China. The Winter Palace and Windsor Castle are merely private dwellings, and even Versailles loses much of its grandeur when compared to [164]
the Imperial Palace in Pekin.

It is only a few months since the Court returned from its protracted exile to the deserted palaces; and what a brilliant and magnificent spectacle that grand procession afforded on the long route through five cities and so many gates and bridges! although the uniforms of the soldiers must have looked rather shabby and the coats of the mandarins somewhat worn. The pageant must have been one of the most striking ever seen.

V
THE CHINESE CITY

The skill of the mechanics and industry of the Chinese artisans are proverbial, and it is a never-ending source of interest to watch them, or to study the commercial spirit of the people. I have lately seen a good deal of the commercial life of Pekin, though I am more familiar with that of Niu-chwang. The long rows of caravans, coming from the western frontier and Tibet, and laden with merchandise peculiar to those regions, are characteristic of the former.

The centre of trade is in the Chinese city; but how can I convey an idea of this to those who do not know this people and this part of the world? What a blending of colours! what noise and dust! what an infinity of light and shade! [165]
what a wonderful mosaic! Who could ever grasp the total effect in all its splendour? Who could ever understand it in all its mystery?

Every detail is so novel, and everything I see comes as a surprise. During my prolonged stay I go out every afternoon on some extended walk of exploration, and the greatest charm of my wanderings is that I come across famous monuments when I least expect them. I divide the city into different portions, and each day I visit another quincunx. My task is the easier owing to the fact that the town is built on a chess-board plan, like a military encampment. Strictly speaking, it is composed of several towns, each having its own distinct characteristics and purpose, and each a peculiar architecture, while each is inhabited by a different caste. The so-called Tartar city is the home of all the Manchus, who followed the present dynasty from their native land. They are mostly public officials, or enrolled in the Imperial army.

The Inner, or Imperial city, is reserved for mandarins and higher Court dignitaries, and encloses the more restricted area with the three consecutive cities—the Purple, Forbidden, and Sacred. One part of the Purple City is entirely reserved for the Empress Dowager, and the other part contains the abodes of the Court and their guardians. The centre of this marvellous maze [166]
is the Emperor's sanctuary.

On the southern side of the Tartar city extends the Chinese city, set apart entirely for commercial purposes, where all the Chinese live, whence its name. All the famous shops are there, and there a bustling trade is carried on from morning till night.

"Are the Pekin sights worth seeing?" is the universal question of new arrivals. It would be easier to give an answer if one were asked, "What is *not* worth seeing, and what can be omitted in Pekin?" Among my many excursions there was not one devoid of some striking discovery—a fine building, unknown spot, or quaint scene; and even when I did not come across any regular sight, I was always surrounded by a world full of interest, a world by itself.

If I were to give my opinion, I should advise the foreigner, before everything, to examine this quaint world which surrounds him, and to seek to understand its exuberant life; and it would be a great advantage to visit the different parts of the city at different hours of the day, to watch the sun rise from the city walls when the town seems to awake with the sudden burst of light, and to pass the morning hours in the narrow lanes, overcrowded with shops; at midday to pay visits to the official yamens and to local grandees, or to drive in the afternoon to one of the temples, or make an excursion to the neighbouring [167] shrines and watch the sun set from the eastern hills, or the top of the famous pagodas, lost amidst the country.

From an artistic standpoint there are a great many gems to be found, while so far as nature is concerned, the surrounding hills are unsurpassed in their scenery.

The Imperial deer-park is very fine too, and in its quiet melancholy offers a charming haunt for solitary rides. Another place for an outing is the famous Princesses' Tombs, which are worth while visiting in every respect. And there is the charming old Portuguese cemetery, with its sad graves of the first Christians, who played such a leading part at the Emperor's Court in the seventeenth century. The inscriptions on the monuments and white marble crosses are so many records of the first missionaries' work. And farther on is one of Pekin's architectural marvels, the well-known so-called Thirteen-storeyed Pagoda. Its walls are richly carved with uncanny figures, and it is covered with an indescribable roof, looking like thirteen umbrellas put one on top of the other.

There are, moreover, the two Summer Palaces, one of rich French rococo, but now lying in ruins, and the other, which still serves as a summer abode, occupying a vast area, scattered over with many kiosks, tea-houses, and yamens, laid out with marvellous gardens, artificial fishponds, and marble bridges. Unluckily, entrance to it is strictly forbidden, and a trespasser would [168] be punished by decapitation. Until quite recently permission was never accorded to a foreigner to penetrate this forbidden paradise. Now on certain occasions the diplomatic body is received within, and at such a function I was an invited guest; but as I have endeavoured, in another chapter, to give a description, however inadequately, of this wonderland of china pagodas, hanging gardens belonging to the modern Semiramis, and forests planted with miniature orchards and pines, I will not enlarge upon them here. It would indeed be impossible to depict in words what can only be realized by sight. I can only hope that others may have the same privilege.

I would give the same advice with regard to the Imperial Palace in Pekin, which, after all, is the greatest wonder of this wondrous city.

While rambling in Pekin, no one should omit to explore the main thoroughfares of both cities, to visit the side lanes, nor to stop before the great Chinese Gate, or Ta-chin-men, and look straight down and enjoy the marvellous panorama of the Ch'ien-men, or Great Street. Sitting on the marble balustrade of the Ch'ien-men San-tau Bridge, one could spend hours in watching the extraordinary scene. The whole population of this gigantic city seems to assemble here at certain hours of the day. Rich mandarins on [169] horses with elaborate trappings and humble coolies, princes coming from Mongolia, carried in splendid litters, are stopped by the half-naked members of the celebrated Beggars' Guild. There are shops on both sides and booths in front of each shop, displaying more modest wares; and besides this double row of shops, there is a third row of goods for sale; but this department consists merely of mats or sheets of paper spread out in the gutter, where ragamuffins offer the treasure-trove of the preceding night. Behind the Ch'ien-men Street is a maze of alleys, packed with warehouses and richly carved fronts, which form the most marvellous bazaar ever seen. And the effect of this fairyland built of cardboard and tinsel is enhanced by the sun coming through the open spaces in the awnings in shafts of light. Indeed, I would strongly recommend every one to take his first reconnoitring walk through the Ch'ien-men quarter.

As for sights and architectural treasures, there is such an amazing number of them that it is necessary to employ a little discrimination and to put aside the ambition of the average sightseer, which is to say, "I did them all."

Among the temples, the Hall of the Classics, or Pi-yung-kung, also called the

Temple of Confucius, which contains the complete text of the nine King or Classical Books, the foundation of ancient Chinese literature, is one of the most remarkable. There are several interesting buildings in its shady [170] grounds, and the entrance arch, covered with beautiful yellow porcelain, is a triumph of Chinese art. Kwo-tsze-chien is another fine pile, and its foundation dates from the time of the Yuan dynasty, which reigned in the thirteenth century. The main hall contains a most interesting wooden tablet, with a characteristic inscription as follows: "The tablet to the soul of the most holy ancestral teacher, Confucius."

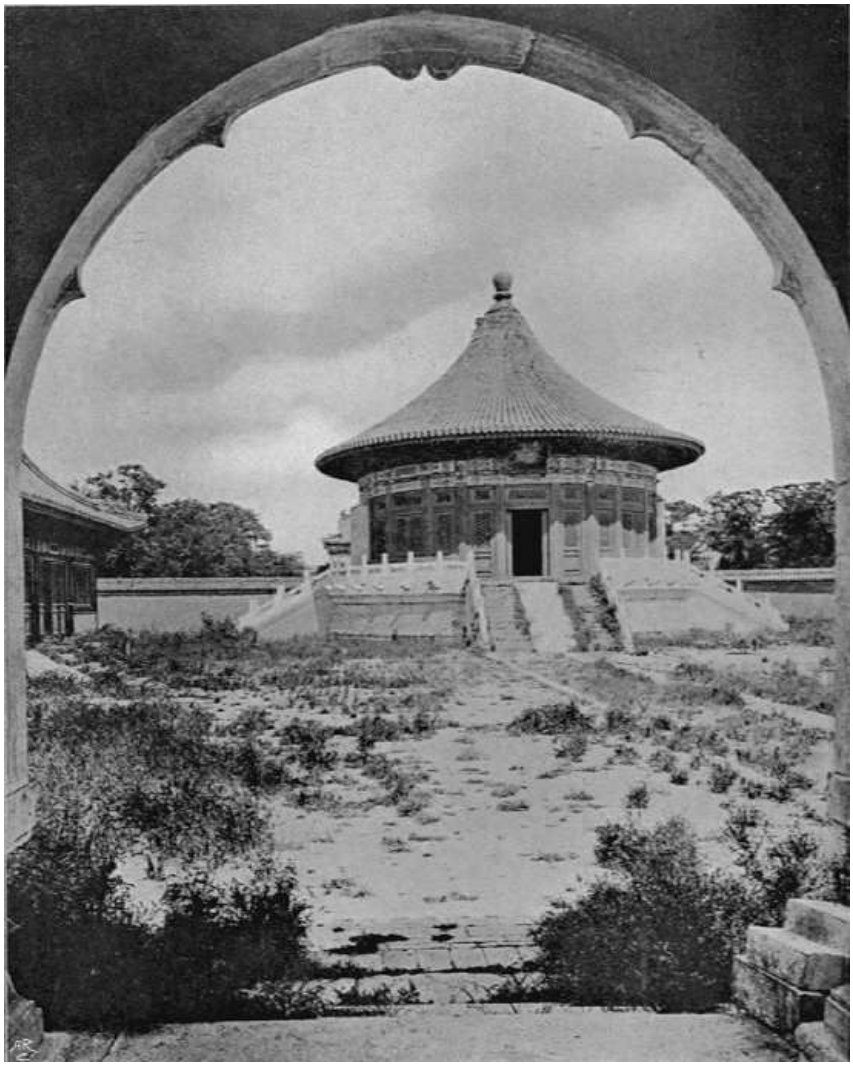
The best known and most often described temple is that of the famous Lama monastery, which is a town in itself, composed of many buildings and still owning many art treasures, some very good pieces of cloisonné, and excellent jade work. At certain hours of the day the monks have services with wonderful ritual, and a procession of the Great Lama, clad in royal purple and saffron-yellow, followed by his silk-draped staff, wearing helmets and crests bristling with feathers. It is a spectacle of unquestionable novelty to a European.

Outside the wall one must not omit a visit to Hwang-ssu, where, in the centre court, stands a white marble monument, erected by the Emperor Kien-lung to the memory of the Teshoo Lama, who was the uncle of the one in Lhassa, the Dalai Lama, and who, during a visit to the Imperial city, where he was the guest of the Emperor himself, died suddenly, as the inscription says, of [171] malignant smallpox. Not less famous is the Ta-chung-ssu, or Temple of the Great Bell. It was built in the sixteenth century, and contains the largest bell in the empire, which a century and a half before was cast by order of Yung-Lo.

But among all the temples, as its name indicates, the finest is the so-called Temple of Heaven, where only the Emperor has the right to offer sacrifice. It stands in a grove, occupying over a square mile, in the south-eastern quarter of the Chinese city, and although it consists of but a few buildings only, each is one of the marvels of the East.

The main hall is a rotunda, a kind of pagoda built on top of a platform, which, with its balustrade and the flight of steps skirting it all round, are of finely carved marble. The colonnade, supporting the umbrella-like roof, is of purple lacquered timber, the tiles being of blue porcelain; and I think it is the only building which is permitted to be covered with the colour of the sky. From this unique shrine, across the grass and through the grove, leads a marble pathway to the Imperial altar.

This altar, if so it can be called, is really another platform like the previous one from which we came, but it is even more imposing, higher, and surrounded by more elaborate stairs and finer balustrades. It has no shrine [172] and no pagoda on the top of it; its colonnade is formed by the cedars and cypresses of the grove which surround it, and the dome of this spotless white marble pedestal is the cloudless blue sky.



THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN
"The main hall is a rotunda"
[To face page 172]

It would be vain to try to make the beauty of this spot comprehensible. Besides, my aim is not to trespass on the domain of a guide-book, which very likely would give a whole chapter to this place, and even so, I am afraid, would never succeed in conveying the poetic impression of the unique shrine.

I must, however, mention a few other places of interest. The Temple of the Earth, for instance, which is also very extensive, has some very fine buildings, a delightful old sundial, and an emblematic well. In an open space there is a field of rice, the symbol of fertility, where the Emperor ploughs the first furrow of the year.

Of course, the two huge towers which look down upon us at a distance through all our wanderings should not be omitted either. One is the Tower of the Gong or Bell, and the other that of the Drum. They are, in fact, two belfries, for announcing all good or evil news to the citizens.

I would also recommend everybody to go where the two Gothic spires lift their graceful forms towards heaven, and to pass an afternoon at the Mission of Pei-tang, where they will meet with an excellent reception and be offered [173]
sincere hospitality. They may still see traces of the Boxer vandalism, ruins and shells piled up in pyramids, a small cemetery where all the martyrs are buried—soldiers and priests, starving children and helpless women—and a small commemorative chapel. It will unquestionably please them to see that most of the ruins have been restored, and that the extensive orphanage houses several hundred children. Pei-tang is a centre, not only of faith but of work, and the children go through hard training schools before they are able to earn their daily bread. The boys as a rule become artisans or tradesmen, and those who show greater aptitude become silversmiths, or cloisonné makers. Those who like study can enter the adjoining grammar school or the seminary. Needlework is the main occupation of the little girls, who make beautiful lace and fine embroideries, and their products find an easy market in the European or Legation quarter.

Pei-tang is certainly worth visiting, and most edifying, and not only co-religionists will find satisfaction in all they see, but any one interested in history, art, education, charitable work, and civilization in general, will gather

useful information and find valuable documents.

As for the evenings in Pekin, even the best guide-book will fail to give advice. At sunset everything is closed and everybody retires; the city gates are [174] barred, and traffic is stopped. Even the famous theatres are deserted, and the plays, which begin early in the morning, must finish at dusk. During the night Pekin is wrapped in silence and darkness. It is only in the European quarter that lights are to be perceived, and loud talk, hoarse laughter, or a hackneyed chorus, issues from a newly opened bar—sad recreation ground for the Allied Troops, giving the Chinese but a sorry example of the European idea of amusement.

Furnished with letters of introduction, which are more necessary in the East than passports, the traveller will have an opportunity of passing some charming evenings at the different legations, and in the houses of the resident diplomatists, officers, priests, and so forth, and they will be able to see how their compatriots live in exile and discuss the last events that have occurred in the West, and, by the blue smoke of a cigar, forecast the possibilities of the East.

VII [175]

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS AND THE EMPEROR OF CHINA AT THE SUMMER PALACE

The glorious rays of the sun burst through it the eastern hills. From night to day is but a moment. There is no lingering dawn. The country is ablaze with colour, and yet the autumn is well advanced towards the so-called St. Martin's summer. In spite of the early hour, the streets of Pekin show unusual bustle. These endless thoroughfares, which on ordinary mornings are so gloomy and deserted, have awaked to life. At the doors of those quaint and attractive shops, full of the strange odds and ends that are of perennial interest to the wanderer in the East, and at the street corners, groups of people are talking vivaciously. Curious eyes are peeping from little windows, and everybody is evidently in expectation of some unusual sight. But what gives the most unfamiliar aspect to the scene is that there are street-sweepers here and there, more or less busy at their work, and a few policemen, in the most fanciful uniforms. It is the day of the Imperial reception of the diplomatic corps. It is an innovation in the functions at the Court of the Dragon that the [176] representatives of the Western nations should be annually received in state, a favour which has been granted since the Allies entered Pekin, one of the very few concessions, I am afraid, that have been granted.

The Court passes the autumn in the beautiful residence some sixteen miles from the city. We are compelled to travel all this way, and by any means we may find convenient, as there is no railway. Some are riding, some are carried in old-fashioned canopied palanquins. I see the conservative representative of Portugal carried by a magnificent team of stalwart Cantonese, with endless pigtails and rich harness—I ought to say livery. Germany, on the contrary, rattles over the most impracticable, neglected highway in a Tyrolean carriage, an object of great wonder and interest to the natives, as it is the first and only four-wheeler in the city.

It is a long journey, but not devoid of interest. We pass through a series of villages and hamlets, each of them teeming with busy life. I must say the energy and industry of the Chinese fill me with admiration. All along the road we meet people bearing signs of trade or commerce. Some are carrying huge baskets of fruit, of flowers, or grain. Others are laden with many kinds of goods. Many push wheelbarrows burdened with more than a European cart could bear. Caravans of heavy Mongolian camels roped together travel to and [177] fro in one never-ending, sinuous line. But the greater part of the traffic is absorbed by the Imperial household.

We must not forget that the Summer Palace is a town in itself, a city inhabited by thousands of mandarins, Court functionaries, attendants, servants, and labourers. The number, I believe, is estimated at ten thousand, and the daily expenses at something incalculable. The country all round is marvellously cultivated. It is interesting to watch the people at work in the fields, and see by what primitive methods they obtain such surprising results.

At last we arrive at the palace, and are met by such a crowd that it is with difficulty that any progress can be made at all. Most of the legations have sent out guards with tents, where the representatives can put on their full dress. We gather afterwards before the palace gates in a typical yamen, a choice specimen of Chinese domestic architecture, simple in conception, but

elaborate in detail.

Prince Ching, Minister for Foreign Affairs, arrives; unquestionably a striking figure and an interesting personality. Slim, even fragile, his yellow skin covers the bones of his face like an old parchment, pale and wrinkled, and the brightness of his small, beady eyes makes a striking contrast. The introductions at once begin; but as Prince Ching does not speak either French or English, his secretary acts as interpreter. [178]

If I remember correctly, this gentleman is a member of one of the numerous Li family; but what I specially recollect is his exquisite manner, exceptional refinement, and wide knowledge. He speaks perfect French, has travelled all over Europe, has stopped in our capitals for years, and taken a special interest in our scientific institutions. I confess to very much surprise when he began to testify his personal appreciation of my own national university of Buda Pesth. Perhaps it is the old-fashioned Chinese dress, mandarin hat, or pigtail, that causes Western people to feel astonished at finding among natives of the Yellow Empire sometimes a more thorough knowledge of the West and a deeper insight into our minds than we can realize.

The empty compliments have been exchanged—and empty indeed they are. At last an escort of palace guards and mandarins arrives, to lead us towards the inner palace gate.

I wish I could have fixed the picture then unrolled before my eyes; or have possessed a lantern of real magic, that could picture now all I saw, outline and colour and haze, all that was bright and all that was shadow!

It was a scene never to be forgotten.

A crowd dressed in all the hues of the rainbow, carrying silken flags, embroidered banners, painted inscriptions, gauze-covered lanterns, and glittering trophies: all the emblems of power, all the symbols of the Celestial Empire. The wondrous crowd stretches into a scattered procession and winds across the narrow lane like a giant serpent, with shimmering scales, in a fairy tale. [179]

A more fitting pageant could not approach the Dragon's Court. The huge scarlet gate, studded with golden nails, swings open on its groaning hinges. Soldiers, like the fantastic creations of an uncanny dream, present their strange medley of arms—long spears, crescent-shaped scythes, threatening spikes, and grim battle-axes, are silhouetted against the peaceful sky.

We enter the huge courtyard, and there is another surprise. A large square, paved with white marble, enclosed on the four sides by four marble terraces supporting each an open hall, covered with yellow tiles, and the whole domed by the sapphire firmament of the Eastern sky. The open space is filled with mandarins, all dressed in dark blue silk embroidered with gold; at first sight all very much alike, and yet in the embroidery very different, each minute detail expressing some distinction. Through the central hall we get to another great courtyard, apparently a copy of the first, larger, finer, and more magnificent, but in style always the same; four open halls, white marble terraces, white marble pavements, golden roofs, and sapphire dome. All the inmates are clad in sapphire and gold, the only colours I could perceive. The whole picture is painted in the gradations of these hues. It was a perfect harmony of colour, so artistic and refined that it compelled admiration. [180]

I have been at many great receptions, but I can remember none more impressive than the reception at the Summer Palace. That suppliants at the throne must arrive through many gates and courts and halls enhances the effect. As you approach, each gate is more magnificent, each courtyard larger, each hall loftier, all combining to add grandeur to the ceremony.

In each court there are suave courtiers and silky mandarins. As we advance the rank is higher, until in the inner court there are assembled the highest Viceroys and Princes of the Imperial blood.

But I have no leisure to observe the glory of the place—gold, jewels, and sunshine are too much together. I can only see a dark blue carpet that leads us to the steps of the central hall—or pagoda, as I would prefer to call it—one of those fancy structures we read about in nursery tales.

The hall seems indeed strange to us; marvellous to Western eyes. It takes me some time to distinguish between colour and shape, what is reality and what is fiction. At first I perceive flowers gathered into wreaths and hung in rich festoons. They are chrysanthemums of many shapes and shades, some exceedingly small, some exceptionally large, some resembling the rose, some like huge spiders; from pale sulphur to dark bronze, there is every hue of gold. They are placed in bowls and vases, marvels of age, of incomparable [181]

beauty and priceless value, which, as I hear from my friend Li, were rebought at extortionate figures from the Europeans who looted them.

And in this perfect garden of flowers there are mounds of magnificent fruit piled up in brightly enamelled cloisonné dishes, fresh peaches, luscious pears, bright oranges; but again, all of them in the tints of gold. Each fruit and flower, of which there are so many standing isolated, has its symbolic meaning in China—the peach, longevity; the plum, youth; the cherry, affection; and the chrysanthemum, everlasting beauty.

But I do not want to read the language of fruits and flowers. What interests me is the artistic beauty of the decorations and the perfect stage management of the surroundings.

From the point of view of the artist or the organizer it is perfect. It is an exquisite harmony, limited to the tones of gold, the sapphire, and the [182] emerald, with the rich hues of a peacock's feather carried to its climax in decorations, paintings, embroidery, dresses, flowers, and fruit.

Each object in the hall has its purpose in the magnificent scheme. It may be a simple chrysanthemum or a flag on the canopy over the throne itself, but they all emphasize the same grand central idea.

Whatever our opinions of Chinese art may be, we cannot fail to admire its vigour and its refinement. During my repeated visits to that land, it gave me continuous interest and constant surprises. It is always grand, always strong, and always refined.

These same features strike me here today in the Summer Palace. The greatness of the architectural conception, the marvellous plan of the surroundings, the amplitude of the accessories, all contribute to make the Summer Palace of Pekin more royal and imperial than any other palace in the world. And again, as to refinement, I cannot imagine anything more charming than the decorations and embellishments, which are modulated like a symphony.

What is the Dowager Empress like? What do you think of the young Emperor? are questions everybody will ask. In the first place, the Empress is of average height, strongly built, and completely self-possessed. As for her dress, I am [183] afraid I cannot describe ladies' attire as I can objects of art. She was, I remember, clad in some dark blue colour, embroidered with golden thread. What struck me most was the Manchu head-dress, which causes the hair to project from the head like the long wings of a bat, each decorated with a bunch of chrysanthemums.

The Empress is a Manchu, and clings to her national garments and fashions, which, if they have no other advantage, at least permit the children's feet to be at liberty, contrary to the Chinese custom.

She was seated on a high throne, elaborately carved, heavily gilded, and covered by a magnificent canopy. Before her was a table, on which she rested her long-nailed fingers. On her left, one step below, the Emperor was seated, making in his meek appearance a striking contrast to his imperious aunt.

It cannot be denied that the Dowager Empress of China has a commanding appearance. Nearly seventy years of age, she looks younger, and her strong features have kept all their mobility. The square forehead, strong nose, and firm mouth, are the most prominent features; but I think her character is best seen in the drooping twitch of the mouth, and her searching gaze. Nothing seems to escape her. During the whole reception her keen glance followed [184] every movement, and examined separately every individual.

THE EMPRESS DOWAGER OF CHINA
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"With the Empress Dowager of China"
[To face page 184]

We stood in a long row before the steps of the throne, and the *doyen* of the diplomatic body stepped forward to deliver his official greeting. It was a cordial speech; taking recent events into consideration, almost too cordial, and I am afraid, as translated by Prince Ching, it assumed an even more complimentary tone.

Even so it did not rise to this proud woman's expectations. She heard it unmoved, without any visible sign of emotion, I venture to say without interest.

Her mouth retained its sceptical curve, her glance was cold and haughty; and when old Prince Ching had kow-towed for the last time to the ground the Empress gave the order by a commanding sign that the answer should be read, but without uttering a syllable.

The answer was read, and listened to in perfect silence. The fall of a leaf could have been heard. It was not long, and merely said, "Her Majesty the Empress was glad the representatives of the Powers had had a favourable day for their visit."

Was it meant to be a compliment or was it sarcasm? It would be difficult to judge. It was ambiguous, but it gave a certain insight into the speaker's character. It might have served to explain a little bit more of this [185]
extraordinary mind which has manifested itself in such manifold ways, and led to so many paradoxical actions. Of the dark stories that are whispered of the palace, I would not like to speak. Whether they are true or false must always remain in doubt.

If the Empress is not talkative when receiving a diplomatic body, if she is silent on a state occasion, it only shows her great caution. It was by her personal ability and hard work she rose step by step to the highest position of the empire. To attain it undoubtedly hard work and strength were required, and to keep it all her life must have called for even greater efforts. And this is so much more the case on account of the insignificance of the part played by women in Chinese life. What ways and means she employed must be left for history to narrate.

As I mentioned before, she seemed to be a keen observer. All she saw, the whole reception, must have been so new to her, if we consider that to be seen by ordinary human eyes is to the Celestial Imperial Family like a crime. Each time the Court moves from the Summer to the Winter Palace, along the whole length of the road each door and shutter is heavily closed, and the

punishment of decapitation hangs over anybody discovered gazing at her.

It must seem even harder to have to receive a body of men in the privacy of her home, for such a proceeding is utterly repugnant to all Eastern conceptions. [186]

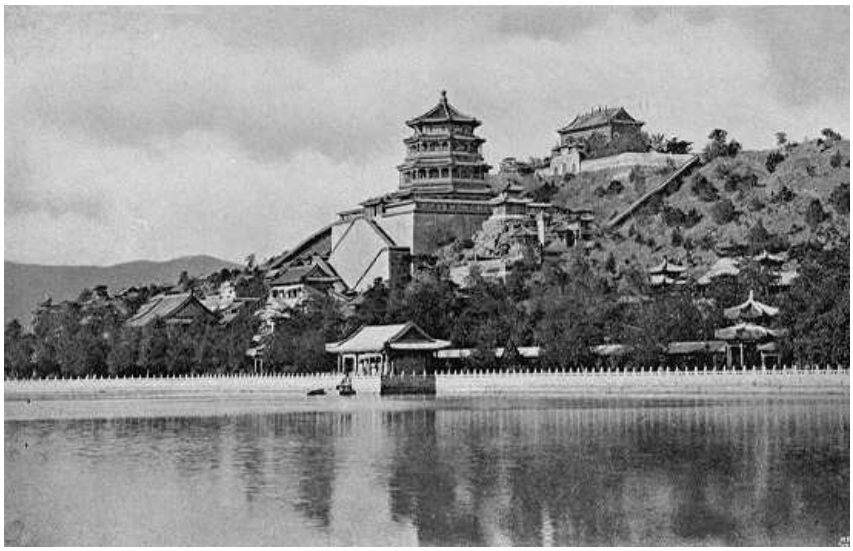
But it might interest people to know that, on one occasion, when she invited only the ladies of the foreign legations, her reception of them was most cordial. She took tea with them, and showed unlimited interest in all their domestic affairs. She wanted to know the number of their children, the exact amount of their incomes; but what seemed to interest her most of all was their age. She admired some of their jewels, and went so far as to ask as a souvenir a very costly fan, and returned, as the greatest sign of her regard, one of her own. Its value was small, as it merely consisted of a few square inches of rice-paper, on which were painted a few chrysanthemums. But, as the Empress explained with a witty smile, the painting was the work of her own hands, and she hoped that would be an ample reward.

There is no question, the Dowager Empress is a clever woman and a skilful politician. The best proof of her diplomatic ability is that she is seated before us on her golden throne. The day on which the rescuing force was led into the besieged city to relieve the famishing legations and help the tortured Christians, the Empress and all her Court were fleeing through a devastated country in a lumbering wooden car. The mighty Empress took refuge in humble houses, hid herself in stables, and crawled for concealment into caves. Who would have believed that those deserted beings, that scattered Court, would return to the palace under the protection of the same allied force that arrived to avenge outraged Justice and set her once more on her throne? [187]

The life of the young Emperor is familiar to all. His struggle for freedom and progress failed utterly, and he now seems, morally and physically, a wreck. I was told that when his ideas had been discovered he was separated from his entourage, shut up in a pavilion, and kept as a prisoner. He sat in his armchair, immovable, almost as if he were asleep. It was a sad spectacle, and one to arouse the deepest sympathy.

We remained for the whole of the day as guests of Their Majesties, wandering in the wonderland of their favourite grounds, going from palace to pagoda, from temple to hall, each a separate gem of Chinese art, and each bearing evidence of wanton mutilation by the allied troops. I felt grieved that such monuments of history and pieces of art, which should have been a cherished possession of all the world, should have been destroyed by what we call civilized white men.

We strolled over marble bridges, climbed pagodas built of china, were shown the marvellous orchard, planted with dwarf trees, the favourite resort of the Princess, and had tea served on the Marble Boat. [188]



THE SUMMER PALACE
"We remained for the whole day as guests of their Majesties, wandering in the wonderland of their favourite grounds"
[To face page 188]

But the great feature of the day was the state banquet, where we were served with, I dare say, a hundred courses of unimaginable dainties: sharks' fins, water-sparrows, eggs of great age, nests of sea-birds, and puppy chops. But I will not weary my readers with such details.

I only want to tell of my journey back along the dusty highway to Pekin. I was so worn out and faint with hunger, not having been able to appreciate the Chinese cooking, that I stopped for rest and a dish of boiled rice at our orphanage at Pei-tang, where the popular hooded nuns, so well known for their heroic sacrifices on battle-fields, in plague hospitals and leper homes, maintain an asylum to save the lives of little children who would otherwise sometimes be killed by their own parents.

These children are brought up to be good men and useful citizens; and I can only wish that the Empress, instead of giving banquets of a hundred courses at the Summer Palace, would send some crumbs to the little starving babes.

And never have I appreciated a meal more than on that evening, after so much gold and glitter and external show, in the humble abode.

VIII [189]

KOREA OF BYGONE DAYS AND ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

I

The history of Korea reads like a fairy tale. The Land of the Morning Calm beyond the seas is so quaint, so very much out of the common, that we can hardly realize that all we hear of it is reality and not mere fiction.

The country, the people, and the life are all strange, and totally different from what we see and meet with in other parts of the world. I can scarcely imagine anything more impressive than for a traveller coming straight from some Western port to land in this country—one of the remotest in the East. It is as though he had set foot in a topsy-turvy world; everything is the reverse of what he has been accustomed to. Facts and ideas are antagonistic to ours; things material and spiritual seem to be governed by other rules and other natural laws.

The origin of Korea is buried in myth and mystery; its past is so varied, such an ever-changing chiaroscuro, that we look upon it as legendary. Its present [190] remains true to tradition.

Within the limits of this chapter I would like to deal with Korea from a more utilitarian point of view, and not merely to describe the traditions, quaint customs, and picturesque features of the land. My desire is to represent Korea not only as one of the quaintest countries on the surface of the globe—a land of old-world type—but as a country in the first stage of transition.

The difference between ancient and modern Korea is stupendous; a few years seem to have done the work of centuries. Korea of the past is undoubtedly the more attractive to the traveller, but Korea of the present does not lack interest for one anxious to find in this corner of the earth something more than panoramic scenery.

The old order still catches the eye everywhere; new reforms are lost in the crowd. Outwardly everything is old, but an inward change is being effected day by day. The ancient cut and faint colour of the garb have been preserved, but new ideas are being constantly interwoven and are obliterating the old. Ancient habits and customs are dying out hourly and irretrievably, and have to give way to modern utilitarianism. The days of old Korea are numbered.

The appearance of the whole country is altered. Railways now intersect the [191] quiet, dreamy countryside; buildings of architectural beauty, as well as humble cottages, are disappearing to make room for modern houses and factories. The charm of the scenery will inevitably vanish in face of the commercial and industrial progress. The world is moving on; it is necessary that it should, and change must follow the flight of time.

But I am glad that I am here today and not to-morrow; glad that I know Korea as it has been in the past. For who knows what future awaits her?

I shall never be able fully to describe my first impressions. Everything that meets my eye is new, that which surrounds me is unintelligible, almost mysterious. Korea and Tibet are the most isolated countries in Asia, and have, therefore, most completely preserved their ancient traditions and customs. It is only a quarter of a century since Korea first opened her gates to foreigners. Radical changes can hardly be expected to take place within a few years; the remodelling of a country and its people is the work of many generations.

II [192]

Korea, as we see on the map, lies at the furthest eastern extremity of the Asiatic continent. It is a peninsula in the shape of an irregular oblong. Its frontiers on three sides are formed by the Japanese and the Yellow seas, and only on the north does a short strip of land divide it from Manchuria. Its area is eighty thousand square miles. The aspect of the country is of great variety, extremely mountainous, just here and there intersected by valleys. Some of the peaks are over seven thousand feet high; but what is more striking than their height is their formation. They are all very rich in mines, and the valleys are extremely fertile, and yet Korea has been, within the memory of man, one of the poorest countries of the world. The mines have never been worked, and the ground yields just enough for daily food. Various reasons for this have been assigned. The mines have not been worked because the Government feared that the gathering together of so many workmen at far-away districts would be favourable to revolutions. A crowd was considered a danger to the reigning family. And I have been told that the cause of the scanty cultivation of the fields is that it is not worth while to have much grain stored in the granaries, for in that case it would surely be confiscated by the Government officials. [193]

The larger rivers, like the Yalu and the Han, would afford excellent means of communication, but navigation is as yet practically unknown. The natural bays could easily afford harbour accommodation for all the fleets of the world, but, except the few open ports, they are only visited by some miserable native wooden junks, and a few Japanese or Chinese fishing-boats.

The climate is excellent; cold, of course, in the winter, but bright and dry; and the heat is never as oppressive in summer as it is in the same latitudes further inland. The natural advantages are plentiful in every respect: the rainfall is sufficient to secure the watering of the fields, the snow in winter protects the ground for several months, and there is bright sunshine in the summer to ripen the most beautiful fruit and grapes; but the refreshing sea-breezes prevent it from being too hot.

The Korean flora resembles, to a great extent, ours. The best-known flowers grow there. I could say the same of vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, beans, peas, etc., which are all plentiful. The one exception is potatoes, which, though they were imported and flourished well in the soil, were forbidden to be grown on account of their being a foreign importation. Turnips, peas, and beans are most commonly grown, and I have counted more than twenty-four varieties of beans, of different sizes, shapes, and colours, but having no taste at all, at any rate not when they are cooked in Korean fashion. Tobacco has been grown lately, and so have grapes; but the most valuable plant cultivated is the *gin-sen*, which is a Government monopoly, and is regarded as possessing the miraculous power of rejuvenating those who drink the liquor which is made of it. It is worth its weight in gold, and a little while ago the Emperor, fearing that the *gin-sen* crop was growing too plentiful and that its value would consequently decline, ordered that the surplus production should be conveyed to an island near Chemulpo and there burned. The closed boxes were carried in procession to the island, watched with great interest by the people, and were burned with great state. Nobody knew exactly what had been the victim of the *auto-da-fé*, but it is more than probable that the *gin-sen*, which is assumed to have met with such a sad fate, was devoted to some more profitable purpose. [194]

Korean timber is of world-wide fame. The huge Korean forests are protected by law, and each individual Korean has certain rights to so much for building purposes, and so much for firing.

Pasture land is scarcely known, and the cultivable areas are nearly all converted into bean and rice fields. [195]

The animal world is of great variety. Among domestic animals we find nearly all our old friends—such as the horse, a rather rough example but strong, oxen with magnificent frames, goats and pigs in great numbers. There are very few cows, as the Koreans are not great meat-eaters, and do not know how to milk, and, consequently, never use milk or butter. Sheep are prohibited by law, as only the Emperor may possess them for sacrificial purposes. Wild animals are very plentiful. The most dreaded are, of course, the tiger and the bear. There are also wolves, jackals, and wild boars. Birds are present in the greatest abundance. Pheasants, partridges, and quails are so plentiful, even today, that, travelling through the country, one may buy a brace for a few pence.

But the real wealth of Korea consists in its minerals. The different mountain ranges are rich in the most valuable metals: coal, copper, lead, silver, and gold are found in abundance. To this subject further allusion is made later on.

As a race the Koreans were for many years thought to belong to the same

family as the Chinese, but it is now considered that they belong to another stock of the great Mongolian race. Its origin is today sought, not so much in the Altai, as on the slopes of the Himalayas. There is a difference of opinion as to the route of their migration. One theory has it that they reached their [196] present home by way of Siberia and Manchuria; another that they travelled through Southern Asia, and partly by sea, from the cradle of mankind.

With regard to their physical characteristics, the Koreans are tall, well built, and fair complexioned, with a scanty beard. They are not quite so tall as the Chinese of the north, but far better proportioned, and generally quite a head taller than their Japanese neighbours. The women are very hard workers, and their strength is exceptional. The children are regular pictures of health.

Whoever desires to form an idea of the moral characteristics of this race must penetrate to their homes and watch their daily life. Their mental and spiritual qualities can best be perceived by daily intercourse. The attempt to enter thus will not be easy, and seldom pleasant, but it will never fail to be of great and permanent interest.

The daily round of the Koreans is yet as primitive and archaic as it was centuries ago, and time seems to have left little mark on their customs and habits.

III [197]

What are the most extraordinary things in this Hermit Country? is the question which has been frequently addressed to me since my return. The answer would be much easier to give if the question were, What are the least striking? Everything equally astonishes a stranger—country, people, customs, and daily life; every detail is characteristic, and every feature—visible and invisible—affords immense scope for observation. For the student of psychology Korea is a country full of interest.

To form some idea of the present condition of Korea it is absolutely necessary to know something of her past; to understand the character of her people one must be familiar with the conditions of life in centuries gone by.

Korea's historical origin, like that of most Asiatic countries, is shrouded in darkness. Her earliest records are legends and stories rather than serious history. Kings and gods, heroes and monsters, figure in a chaotic epic, which has preserved a few of the principal events for posterity.

The founder of the nation is supposed to be Ki-Tsze, a Chinese noble, who, with his soldiers and followers, settled on the peninsula in 1122 B.C. But it is difficult to say how much of this is true, for the Koreans come, not from a Chinese, but from a really different Tartar stock, and consequently Ki-Tsze [198] could only have been a later conqueror. The reason why subsequent chroniclers attributed the settlement of Korea to him was probably to glorify China. A stringent law forbidding the writing of history makes it very difficult to collect any authentic facts about the past of Korea. That a record of the principal events still survives is due to a remarkable custom.

Some of the Court officials kept diaries in which they recorded everything of any importance that took place. Each related what seemed to him of interest, sealing up the rolls with great secrecy. Four copies of these records were kept in iron chests at the four different seats of government. There the documents were to remain until the then reigning family became extinct, and not until the last representative of the dynasty had departed this life might they be published.

In the absence of national historical literature foreign conquerors—Chinese and Japanese—have issued a number of books on Korea, more particularly in reference to their own conquests. It would, however, be difficult to ascertain how far these works are to be trusted.

Only one popular Korean history is in existence, which, however, is more of an illustrated nursery tale than anything else. The diaries kept by some of the noble families are more interesting, wherein they have recorded in unbroken [199] series the events of each day, year by year.

The first reliable information we possess dates from the early centuries of our era. It is an established fact that Korea was then divided into three kingdoms —Sin-La in the south, Kao-Li in the north, and Pet-Si in the west. These early centuries witnessed constant civil wars, in which sometimes one and sometimes another of the kingdoms was victorious; but the greatest advantages were won by Sin-La in the south. In a good many cases these successes were due to outside aid. Kao-Li and Pet-Si became more than once vassals of China or Japan.

The three kingdoms were united in the eleventh century. Sin-La lost its supremacy and, with Pet-Si, was annexed to Kao-Li. The king of this country was assisted by China in his expedition to the north, and in return the Mongol emperor was made the overlord of Korea. The united kingdoms were then ruled for three centuries by the Kao-Li dynasty, but their power ceased with the expulsion of the Mongol rulers from Pekin.

The emperors of the Ming dynasty, who became masters of China in the fourteenth century, also conquered Korea in 1392, re-establishing the ancestors of the present Emperor in place of the house of Kao-Li. Tao-Tso, the first king, transferred his capital from Kai-Teng to Hang-Jang, the present [200] Seoul, recognizing the suzerainty of China as a protection. He adopted the Chinese calendar and sent envoys to China to pay homage every year.

Subsequent events of Korean history can be explained in the light of these facts. With the Tsi-Tsien dynasty she became the openly acknowledged vassal of China. The sending of envoys to do homage, the presentation of previously settled gifts, and also the adoption of the Chinese calendar afford proofs of this.

The succeeding kings managed the affairs of the country successfully, and Tormer-To in the thirteenth century annexed several Japanese islands, but this burst of glory soon died out.

With the fall of the Mings the history of Korea reached its nadir. The conquering house of Mand-Su inundated with its troops the whole country and broke into Seoul, rendering even stricter the obligations of the tributary. The Chinese calendar became official from this time, and the Celestial Son was not only sovereign, but also managed absolutely all the private and public affairs of the king of Korea.

A good number of imperial rescripts referring to family quarrels has, to this day, been preserved, and throws an interesting light on the dissipated life of the Court of that remote period.

Korean kings stood repeatedly like criminals before their judge, and carried out the emperor's sentence to the letter. But they went further than this, even [201] to asking the Chinese emperor for counsel in reference to petty domestic troubles, divorce cases, etc.

As a rule the sentence was light. The former Mongolian despots lost their crowns partly through over-severity. The Mings, on the contrary, were clever diplomatists, and by their tact retained Korea's goodwill.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that their memory is still held in esteem, and the administration of the country, its customs and laws, to this day represent the Ming spirit.

China's present Manchu dynasty has never been popular, although it did not attempt to perpetuate, literally, the strict conditions of its first conquest.

Since the middle of the seventeenth century Korea has never been at war with any foreign power; but though no attacks have come from without, intestine troubles have been even more marked and destructive.

The example was set by the royal family. In the absence of male issue, the relatives split into two parties, who, under the names of *Piek-Pai* and *Si-Pai*, have been rivals for years. Bloodshed and murder followed each other; dagger and poison were hidden under each cloak at the Court. These two factions are still in existence. The followers of Piek are for fighting and [202] progress; the Si party, on the contrary, represent rather conservative views.

The example of the Court and of the chief officials was followed by the nobility. The principal persons of the country formed themselves into four parties. We can trace back the origin of the strife to the sixteenth century; its cause was the possession of an office. Two of the most powerful tribes claimed it, and their personal contention soon assumed the form of a general principle. Each party had its supporters until the whole country fell a victim to party strife—as was the case with the clans of the Montagus and Capulets, or between the houses of York and Lancaster of old.

After considering these premises it will be easier to understand Korea's present political situation.

We have seen that for many centuries the country was under foreign rule, governed now by China, now by Japan; generally by China, who more often than not was a very mild and lenient mistress.

Although she gave Korea a free hand in her government, she retained the exclusive control of foreign affairs; and, correctly speaking, she did not

manage them at all. But no matter who the ruler was, Japan or China, their sole object was always to isolate the country as much as possible from the outer world, to surround her with a visible or invisible wall—in the same way as their own flowery lands. This is one of the principal causes why Korea has been utterly secluded for centuries. [203]

But here is another cause. The people, not being able to defend their country against invaders, were anxious that it should remain as unknown as possible. They went even further than that, and hid the natural treasures from their own citizens.

IV

The ancient government of their kingdom was, as in most Oriental countries, extremely complicated. The system undoubtedly shows knowledge of considerable statesmanship, China being the model. The mistakes and shortcomings lay in the execution and administration.

The absolute master and owner of the country was the king, who had by his side three ministers of the first, and six of the second rank. Each minister was assisted by one secretary of state and one councillor. The cabinet was called Tai-Sin, forming the Council of State. The power of the council was only nominal, and was invested in the three ministers of first rank, or, rather, in the premier, whose office was for life. Is it to be wondered at that every means was employed to attain it? [204]

It is worth noticing that the bearers of the title were not necessarily in power. They succeeded each other, some of them having only honorary rank.

The country was divided into eight governorships. Each governor, with powers similar to those of a Chinese viceroy, had under him vice-governors, county judges, public notaries, collectors of taxes, etc. Considering that the eight governorships were divided into 332 provinces, the administration naturally was extensive, requiring a complicated administration.

The organization of the army was likewise well developed—on paper at any rate—the generals being distributed according to the provinces. Each governorship had its separate army corps, forts, arsenals, and stores recorded with precision. The national defence nominally numbered not less than *one million two hundred thousand men*, although not one-hundredth part of those had ever seen a rifle. All this looked very imposing in the documents placed before the king. The same applied to the forts, arsenals, and stores. The forts were in ruins, the arsenals empty, and as for the stores, they did not exist. At any rate, this was the condition of the army when the first European troops entered the country. There is probably not another land in the East—and this means a good deal—where the government was more corrupt than in Korea. [205]

The principal offices were sold at fixed prices. To obtain one was simply a financial transaction. Of course, directly the mandarin took up his position he was anxious to recoup his expenses. Under some pretext he confiscated the property of well-to-do citizens and extorted money from the people. This system had another disadvantage—the tenure of office was of short duration, lasting altogether a few years. The holder had, therefore, to be very economical with time. The mandarins generally remained two or three years only at one place, in order not to make themselves "at home." But the principal reason for such continual changes must have been that it was considered desirable at headquarters to sell the office to a new purchaser. So the succession went on, and one official after another devoted his energy to confiscation and robbery.

Is it to be wondered at that the people were reduced to poverty? But even those who were possessed of property lived the life of beggars, as otherwise the mandarins would have confiscated it under various pretexts.

Such was the administration of Korea for centuries. This was the condition of public life. Both action and thought were tainted. This corruption of officialdom not only drove people to beggary, but also poisoned the public morals. [206]

The people were no longer capable of governing; they could only suffer patiently.

If government and administration were in such a lamentable condition, justice was even more contemptible. Bribery, perjury, and treachery were of daily occurrence. Envy and greed demanded and secured their victims. To be possessed of property was sufficient cause for being denounced and for confiscating the belongings of the owner, and the victim was very grateful indeed if his life was spared. The administration of justice in Korea was

originally patriarchal. Any dispute between two parties was submitted to the *elders* of the village. The local council was the court of first instance. In case of non-agreement the mandarin was appealed to. The governor had to decide complicated cases. The supreme court was the minister of justice himself, and the final appeal lay to the king, who, here likewise, had absolute power in rendering justice. He condemned or pardoned at his pleasure.

Tradition has preserved some of the quaint ways employed to obtain the king's good graces or attention. As it was an impossibility to get into the palace of the king, and he never quitted it, a large drum was placed before the gate, and the applicant used to beat this drum in order to attract the royal [207] attention.

Another way was to light a bonfire upon the top of the surrounding hills in the hope of the king perceiving it and dispatching one of his messengers to the spot, by whom the petitioner could send his papers to his majesty.

Criminal cases were heard before the military authorities.

Here also the system was very much the same, and the procedure was equally defective. The way cases were tried was not only one-sided, but shockingly unjust. The saddest part of judicial administration was the way of obtaining the accused person's confession. Torturing is, even now, the prevailing practice, and in this, as in many other things, Korea has entirely followed China's example.

Considering the various kinds of torture, their inventive powers seem to have been inexhaustible. The most cruel torture, like the crushing of the knees or the use of red-hot irons, was prohibited long ago, and the new law ordered them to be entirely abolished; but I am afraid some of the methods of obtaining the desired evidences are still terrible.

Those who have seen the notorious dungeons of *Canton* will find the Korean prisons similar to them. Generally the courtyards of the magistrates are used for guarding the convicts. Stables are crammed with prisoners—mostly [208] innocent. Furniture is a thing unknown, and so are all means of cleanliness.

In the Yamen of Judicature at Seoul I saw a few small private cells reserved for the better class. The inmate of one of these was a venerable-looking white-haired gentleman. He was, so the prison warder informed me, one of the wealthiest bankers in the town. "He squeezed," as he put it, "and now the mandarin is squeezing him."

Attorneys-at-law and jurists were not wanting, but in most cases the number of witnesses and their evidence was decisive—there being always any number of them at hand. In fact, giving evidence meant a living to a portion of the community, who favoured those who paid best.

The methods of punishment also varied. In most cases fines were imposed, which formed one of the principal sources of revenue to the authorities. Imprisonment was rarer. In order to save the expenses of keeping prisoners who could not pay a fine, these were often given a chance to escape, or disappeared by some other means.

Capital crimes were tried by a criminal court. Decapitation was carried out in various ways according to social position. *Lèse-majesté* and treason were likewise dealt with by special authorities. In this respect severity knew no [209] bounds. With the guilty person all the members of his family had to suffer. More than once whole clans, which were suspected of being traitors or rebels, were extirpated. Hundreds of persons perished through being falsely accused of crimes.

Such was the judicature in days gone by, and no wonder that the people lost faith in judges whose sense of justice was of the lowest standard. Things seem to be improving, but a less cruel death implies cruelty all the same.

V

How did Korea educate her sons that her rule, her justice, and her people sank so low? is a question that involuntarily suggests itself.

We must at once point out that there existed no such thing as *public education*; as regards *public instruction*, Korea entirely followed the Chinese system. As in the Yellow Empire, it was only the successful passing of the various university examinations that qualified for public positions and Government offices. Here also training was purely classical. But while in China the national masters—Confucius and Menzius—were studied, Korea, without any regard for her history or literature, adopted the ready material in an unaltered form. Her own authors thus found no field for their labours, and [210] even if endowed with talent they were unable to develop it. This condition

was in many respects similar to that prevalent in Europe in the Middle Ages, when colleges paid more attention to Greek and Latin than to their national language, and when students knew more about the history of Hellas and Rome than of their own country.

The Chinese system of examination is so well known that it does not require any explanation. Prior to the final examination the students gather in Pekin. There they are walled in in small cells at the examination hall, entirely isolated from the outer world.

Korean youths proceeded to Seoul. From the remotest parts of the country they came, and it was there decided whether they were qualified for office or not.

The Chinese system is perfectly democratic in its ground principles, granting the same right to every student and considering only his knowledge. In Korea, where, quite differently from China, there is an aristocracy of birth, only the sons of this privileged class competed for the principal offices. But in this instance too, as in most other things that affected public life, corruption manifested itself. Those who paid the highest examination fees won the highest offices.

The Korean is probably one of the Tartar languages, although its grammar [211]
shows many analogies with that of the Dravidian tongues of Southern India. It is mostly spoken by the common people, whilst the court, nobles, and mandarins employ Chinese. As a matter of fact, the latter is the official language of the country, and the records and proclamations of the King, the edicts of the mandarins, and the judgments of the courts are all in Chinese. No doubt Korea's long vassalage to China accounts for this; but the Chinese, as spoken in Korea, is almost a dialect, and could scarcely be understood by the Celestials, who, as is well known, are themselves often at a loss to understand each other. For Chinese differs even more in different provinces than some of the Latin languages, like, for instance, Spanish from Italian.

VI

The present Emperor, Li Hsi, is a man of but little over fifty, and has reigned for just forty years. The son of Li Cheng Ying, he succeeded his brother, Li Ping, in 1864. During his minority his father, Tai Wen Kun, assumed the regency, which lasted till 1873. A man of strong will and boundless ambition, he used every means, permissible or otherwise, to further his own ends. Of narrow judgment and of most reactionary views, he has been the cause of [212]
much misfortune to his country. He opposed every innovation and reform, hated everything that was not Korean, and instigated the persecution of the Christians, causing many hundreds to be killed. The young Emperor held entirely different opinions, but all his attempts to introduce advanced ideas have been checked by the party of reaction. Hardly had he commenced his reign when he was asked by his own father to commit suicide. Later on Tai Wen Kun began intriguing against the Empress, fearing her influence over the Emperor, and he was so nearly successful in a scheme to murder her that she only escaped with her life by hiding for a whole year. She was believed to be dead, and mourning was worn by the whole country. Finally public opinion became so enraged against this unnatural father-in-law that he was banished from Korea. His supporters, however, were still numerous enough to be a cause of trouble, and in 1884 they broke into insurrection, and the Emperor, in his turn, had to flee, escaping on the shoulders of a slave. Shortly afterwards, during a state ceremony, a bomb of the most modern construction exploded, killing one of the ministers and some of the escort. Tai Wen Kun was not present at this ceremony!

It was in the revolution of 1895 that the Empress lost her life. Her palace was [213]
surrounded by rebels, she was stabbed, and then her body was burnt in an open space before the palace. The Emperor was more fortunate. Hidden in a sedan-chair he was taken to the Russian Legation, where he remained a guest for a prolonged stay. It would, however, be impossible to give an account of all the intrigues and plotting during the Emperor's forty years' reign. Poison has been found in the food, the palace has been set fire to, murderers have been found hidden in it; in short, it would require a whole chapter to describe the narrow escapes the Emperor has had. But even what I have said will show that Korean sovereigns are not always to be envied! Yet after the Japanese war of 1894 the King (for till then he had been only a king, the vassal of China) declared his land to be independent of Chinese control, and elevated himself to the rank of emperor. Such are life's ironies.

But if the Emperor's public career has not been very glorious, his family life has proved even less happy. He lost his wife, a woman of more than average ability and to whom he was devoted, in a terrible manner as we have seen. The Crown Prince has always been unsatisfactory and of no political

importance. The second royal prince, who is unquestionably clever and enterprising, is considered a dangerous innovator, and so strong is the feeling against him in his father's palace that he is obliged for the safety of his life to live in America. [214]

The question who will succeed Li Hsi interests everybody in Korea, and is the occasion of much plotting and intrigue, but I am afraid it is one of the problems which no one can answer or even guess at!

VII

The home life of any country is always of the deepest interest. Old memoirs and diaries never fail to fascinate, more especially in the case of a country almost entirely unknown, whose habits and customs will surely be so modified as to disappear altogether, and it is therefore well to preserve the memory of them for the coming generations.

A Korean home, however flimsy it may appear, is a regular stronghold. It has its own traditions, and its inhabitants form a regular community of their own. Its rule is patriarchal and its organization entirely Oriental. Divided into two distinct parts, the front is occupied by the male, and the inside reserved for the female sex. However small the house may be, this rule is strictly observed; even though the division may sometimes be only a sheet of paper, its moral strength is as great as the ramparts of a castle. Conventions are stronger than stone walls. [215]

In order to enable the reader to form some idea of Korean family life, I will give a passing notice of some of the habits, customs, and institutions, such as marriage, education, occupations and recreations, festivities and funerals.

The condition of women in the Land of the Morning Calm is abominable, for they are considered as mere slaves, with no privileges or rights whatever.

In the upper classes the children of the two sexes, as soon as they reach the age of eight or ten, are separated from each other, the boys being removed to the front part of the house where the father lives, whilst the girls are left with their mother at the back.

It is considered very bad form for brothers and sisters to associate with each other. The inevitable consequence is that family life, as we understand it, has no existence there.

The Korean regards his wife as a being far below him, and would not think for a moment of consulting her on anything of consequence. Although man and wife live under the same roof they are practically aliens to each other. But strange to say, though women in Korea have no rights, either social or within their own family circle, they are outwardly respected and addressed in terms of high esteem. [216]

If we consider that the bride has innumerable duties to observe towards her consort, while he has none towards her, it seems only natural that the number of happy unions is strictly limited. But notwithstanding the abnormal relations that exist between the parents, the children are brought up by the mother to respect their father deeply. Disrespect towards the mother is of no consequence, but insubordination to the father is severely punished. In prison, sickness, or old age, a father can always rely on the assistance and support of his son. No virtue in Korea is esteemed more than filial devotion.

A peculiarity of a Korean marriage is that it is a matter of interest to every one except the parties mostly concerned, who see one another for the first time at the beginning of the ceremony. The parents and friends arrange the match, in accordance with their own interests, and if both parties agree and the bargain is concluded, the formalities are of the simplest. There is no religious ceremony and no legal contract. Early in the morning the best man arrives to tie the bridegroom's pigtail in a knot on the top of his head, and this not only remains for ever as an outward and visible sign of his condition, but entitles him to be treated as a man and to enter public life. He may be a mere child, just over ten years of age, but he has no longer any right to play with his friends and must choose his associates among old men—octogenarians they may be. He has all civil rights and is expected to behave accordingly. If, on the contrary, a man is unable to afford the luxury of a home and a wife, he may reach the age of fifty, but he must still wear his pigtail down his back, has none of the advantages of a citizen, and is expected to play with kites, marbles, and such-like, and any folly he may commit is excused, as would be the naughtiness of a baby, who is not responsible for his actions. [217]

The wedding ceremony itself is most simple. There is no going to the registry office or to church. The whole function consists of a procession, when the bride and bridegroom are conducted by their respective relations to a dais;

there they are put face to face, and see each other for the first time, look at each other, bow, and the knot is tied indissolubly. The mutual surprise sometimes must be rather unexpected. But, whether agreeable or not, it is considered very bad taste to show any emotion. Without exchanging a single word, a few minutes afterwards the young bride is conducted to her home, where she is cloistered for ever. Social etiquette demands that the bridegroom shall return to the company of his young bachelor friends for a few days, which are passed in festivities, if not orgies. A honeymoon is unknown, and wedding trips have never been instituted. The young wife [218] becomes more or less a head servant to her mother-in-law, and no visible change is introduced into the husband's daily routine. If married life begins in such extraordinary conditions, it remains equally ill-balanced all through life. The husband has everything, the wife nothing; she has not even a name. And yet, though legally a nonentity, socially, if clever, she can attain to a certain position. Unseen, unknown, and nameless, in a hidden corner of the women's quarter, she can receive her lady friends, get all the news of the outer world, and send messages by her slaves. There have been cases when women had even decisive political influences, and, like spiders, ambushed in corners, spread their nets.

VIII

The main occupation of the Korean is agriculture. It is the ground which produces everything that is necessary for life, and it is the ground, also, which is taxed principally to furnish the necessary funds for the Government. The methods of cultivation are exceedingly primitive, but the soil itself is so extremely fertile, and the irrigation so good, that the crops are quite sufficient. The women share in the cultivation of the fields, besides which [219] they do all the domestic work, which is no mean task if we take into consideration that many functions performed in other countries by tradesmen must here be performed by them, such as the cutting of the flax, the preparing and weaving and the making of it into garments—so that they are field labourers, manufacturers, weavers, tailors, and finally washerwomen to their own husbands and households. It is the same with all the food. The poor women must first grow the rice and beans, then cut and dry them, pound them, and lastly cook them. But the principal occupation of the women of Korea is the preparing of their husbands' suits of clothes. A Korean has generally two suits of white linen, each of which he wears in turn for a week. These suits are not sewn, but stuck together, and every week the suit that was worn the week before must be taken to pieces, washed, and then glazed by beating, which last occupies almost a whole week.

The recreations of the women are very few, and, in fact, they are treated as slaves to their husbands. The men, on the contrary, have all kinds of amusements. The two great national sports are shooting with bows and arrows, and flying of kites. They are very fond of open-air gatherings, and arrange most delightful picnics, where they entertain their friends, and engage professional singers and dancers to amuse them. These singers and [220] dancers are women who form a separate caste. Westerners find it difficult to appreciate Korean music, but I could not help liking its quaint cadence and plaintive melancholy. The songs mostly treat of historical legends and reminiscences of old days, but some, of course, are lyric. Korean dancing, on account of its dignity and calm, is by far the most plastic and rhythmical of all Oriental worship of Terpsichore.

Among the old customs, birthday festivities occupy the first place, particularly when a man attains his sixtieth year. On that day he becomes an object of admiration to the whole community, having been spared by Fate to such an age. After this day whatever he may say is listened to with great respect, even if his advice is not always followed.

But of all the social institutions funerals play the most important part. These last for days, or weeks, and even sometimes for a whole month, and mourning is observed for several years. And this observance is strict in Korea. One may even say that a mourner is buried alive, for he must cover his face, and, if he meets his friends in the street, he may not stop to speak to them or shake hands. During my stay in Seoul one of the late Empress's relations, General Ming, died, and I never saw a more magnificent pageant than his funeral. The [221] cortège was over a mile long, and led by paid weepers. As it wound its way along, it was the most extraordinary conglomeration of riders, dancers, children, mourners, officials, torch, lantern, and flag bearers, and, in fact, it seemed to absorb the whole population of Seoul.

Children do not receive too much attention in this far-away country. The little girls soon share in the housework, and the boys leave their mothers when they are about six, being sent first to school and then to the men's quarters, where they are carefully secluded from any kind of woman's society, even

from that of their own sisters.

Any one who is interested in Korean children will have an opportunity of studying their national characteristics and natural abilities in the schools, of which there are a great many in Korea. Besides the old-fashioned Primary Schools, there are the Chinese Classical Schools, Missionary Schools, and, last but not least, the different National Schools for Interpreters. There are several English, even more Japanese and Russian, all of which undoubtedly will be of some use; and there is even a German School, and, of course, a French Interpreters' School. I must say I was deeply interested to see the scholars, neatly dressed in white cotton, sitting with Oriental patience at their [222] desks, and pronouncing with the greatest assiduity the unpronounceable and to them unintelligible syllables. I admired the endurance and self-control of the children. If they are not quick and have not the imaginative capacity of a Japanese child, they are good, even if not so deep thinkers as the Chinese.

The houses in Korea are very small and offer but little comfort. Most of them have not more than two rooms, exclusive of the kitchen. Three-roomed dwellings are very uncommon, and without exception are most scantily furnished. The roadside inns naturally are of the most primitive kind, and visitors are expected to bring their own provisions and bedding with them.

The staple food consists of rice and a few vegetables; people with some means eat occasionally a little meat or fish. Milk and butter are unknown. Beef is difficult to obtain, except in the capital. There is no mutton, but plenty of dog's flesh.

The principal beverage is made of fermented rice. Koreans, like Chinese, are fond of their pipes, and smoke a great deal.

Their dress is very ample. To be smart, you must wear two or three pairs of trousers, as many shirts, and four or five kaftans made of white linen. Sandals are the principal foot-gear.

Chess is one of their popular games. High and low are alike enthusiasts. In [223] fact, the Koreans have almost as high a reputation for skill in the game as the Chinese.

They are also fond of card-playing. Gambling seems to be in the blood of the Yellow races. There is no country where card-sharpers drive so brisk a business as in Korea.

In outdoor sports the Korean does not excel. His disinclination to physical effort is too strong and his nature is altogether too lethargic for violent exertion. Such mild diversions as kite-flying and archery he sometimes does indulge in, and, if so, shows no little proficiency.

Game is plentiful, but energy rare, and so we do not find many types of the shikari of India, but more of the trapper class.

The Koreans are a musical people. Every village has its choir—its amateur musical society. With them songs are largely used as an accompaniment to the dance. Here, at last, the Korean awakes.

The theatre proper is not represented in this country, but they have dramatic performances of a kind.

Recitations are given by a single performer, who himself plays all the characters of the story. It reminds one somewhat of the Homeric rhapsodists, or the medieval jongleurs.

IX

The last quarter of the nineteenth century has brought about some [224] unexpected changes in Korea. The rigid isolation is gradually vanishing. Not even Chosen is able to conceal from the outer world her hidden and Hermit Land.

The first breach was made by the United States Navy. Commodore Shufeldt was the first representative of a Western Power to conclude a treaty with her. A year later the Anglo-Korean commercial agreement was ratified. Then the other European Powers came in their turn to establish diplomatic relations there. In the meantime the prejudice against the foreigner is losing a good deal of its virulence. The first steps towards international intercourse had been made.

These relations with foreign countries promise, above all, to be advantageous to commerce and industry; and considering the comparatively short period during which this influence has been at work, and the primitive conditions of locomotion, foreign trade is making unexpected progress. The receipts of the

foreign Customs are steadily increasing, and whilst the returns of 1893 amounted to 7,986,880 yen, in 1898 they reached the sum of 24,702,237 yen. The latest statistics show the Customs revenues as £122,783. The *total* import of the last year represented £1,382,381, and the exports £846,034. [225]

Besides the capital, *Seoul*, *Chemulpo*, *Fusan*, *Gen-San*, *Mokpo*, *Chinampo*, *Masampo*, *Kunsan*, and *Song-ching* are being opened to trade. The general commerce is almost exclusively in the hands of Japanese and Chinese. In this respect Japan has made extraordinary progress during the last few years. In 1897 her imports amounted to 1,911,851 yen, and those of England were 3,713,907 yen. Four years later the Japanese trade increased to 2,844,815 and England's dropped to 2,853,866. Since the Commercial Exhibition at Osaka, Japan's trade with Korea has advanced even more, so that, for instance, cotton goods, once imported exclusively from Manchester, are now replaced by the fabrics of Nippon. The latter seem to be in a more advantageous position, for, considering that the distance between Japan and Korea is inconsiderable and the wages in these two countries are only one-sixth of those in English manufacturing towns, European products are experiencing more and more difficulty in competing with the Japanese in Asia. The shipping trade, too, is in the hands of Japan, and in the course of last year 3920 vessels with nearly a million tons of cargo anchored in the ports of Korea. Besides Japan and England, there is America that is seeking a new market for her exports. Of continental European countries, Germany is [226] represented by the greatest number of articles, though of small importance and size, like nails, stove pipes, needles, chemicals, and aniline dyes. The total imports from Germany at present scarcely represent a quarter of a million marks.

The Chinese share the local trade with the Japanese. The shopkeeper belongs to one or other of the neighbouring states. As we observed when referring to the past state of Korea, her own people possess no commercial instincts. Their needs are few, and even those are supplied in their homes. Their clothes are woven and sewn by their wives. The flax grows in their gardens. Every house has as much ground attached to it as suffices, more or less, for the wants of the family. More than that is not required. It is owing mainly to this patriarchal simplicity that, though the soil of the country is rich, not half of it is under cultivation.

The manner of tilling the soil is rather primitive. Up to this day wooden ploughs are used. Threshing is done by ordinary poles. Agricultural implements are unknown.

In spite of her fertile valleys, favourable climate, and cheap labour, Korea is not agriculturally developed. Of its products, rice takes the first place. There is also plenty of wheat, barley, oats, and beans. The most profitable plant is [227] *gin-sen*, which has already been described.

The principal wealth of Korea is undoubtedly stored in its mines. The amount of ore contained in the mountains of the country is prodigious. There are numerous ancient gold and silver mines, although their working was prohibited by law. Since the conclusion of the international treaties some of them have been taken over by foreign companies, and already, during the last few years, have produced considerable profits. In 1897 the export in gold amounted to 2,004,049 yen, in 1901 to 4,993,351 yen. But under the present conditions it is impossible to ascertain the exact amount. The mountains in the north-eastern part of the country are the richest in gold. The capital invested is mostly German and Belgian.

In addition to gold and silver, there are copper, iron, and coal mines in working, but commercial enterprise is rather handicapped by the want of means of communication.

X

Until recently Korea was not only almost devoid of railways, but had scarcely any roads. Transport by means of carts is to this day exceptional—oxen and pack-horses only being employed. Endless strings of caravans cover the whole [228] length of the land. Seeds, timber, fuel, metal, and stones—everything is carried by cattle to its destination. But human labour is even more general and much cheaper than animal labour. It is still the man's shoulder that carries most of the load and burden. What a Korean can carry is almost incredible. Besides heredity it is only through long training that he has acquired such exceptional strength.

One of the most ancient organizations of Korea is the Pedlars' Guild. It was founded centuries ago. There are families who for generations have known no other occupation than carrying the miscellaneous pack from one part of the country to another. They wander over hills and dales from morning till night.

Like their ancestors they migrate continually. It is little wonder that they should have known the inner state and life of the country better than anybody else. They were the carriers of news in Korea, and represented the Press of their land, and their influence and power still prevail. Public opinion finds in them its most direct interpreter. There is no movement, outbreak, or revolt in which they do not participate. The most important messages are conveyed through the pedlars, and it is their guild that nourishes the flames of all rebellions.

In Korea there are several fine rivers. The *Han*, watering the central [229] provinces of the country, and the *Yalu* in the north, are the two principal ones. During a few months of the year both are frozen. Neither of them is used as a waterway. The traveller who is fond of adventures hires a fishing-barge, engages a dozen fishermen, and taking with him some old furniture and provisions, tries to make himself comfortable in that Noah's ark. Steamers are unknown on the rivers.

Railways are now in a somewhat more advanced stage. Between Chemulpo and Seoul there is a regular train service, and the short distance of twenty-six miles can be covered with Western comfort.

Japan is at present engaged in building the great southern line as far as Fusan. A French company has obtained the concession to build the northern line. On the other hand, the work of a private company on the line leading towards Manchuria is making little headway. Still, it is only a matter of time for Korea to become a network of railways. Then her harbours will be the natural gates of Eastern Asia. Her bays in the south are always free from ice, making most excellent ports, and capable of harbouring any number of ships. Chemulpo, but more particularly Fusan, the extreme southern point of the peninsula, must necessarily become one of the termini and one of the principal emporiums of the whole continent. I do not think that those who [230] look upon it as the Shanghai of the future are mistaken.

Besides railways, Seoul possesses also an electric tramway and electric light. Both concerns were planned by American companies, and are said to be very profitable. The new Mint is also organized on European principles. The standard money is the Japanese yen; the brass rings used formerly as small coins are being replaced by the nickel sen. The various commercial articles are steadily undergoing changes, and manufactured goods are ousting the homemade products of the small shops. Each day supplies new things and ideas. Each week marks another step on the road to progress. The work is slow, being rendered difficult by many obstacles from within and without, but it cannot now be stopped in its natural course.

Korea is at present in her first stage of transition. The old system has collapsed, and a new order must be inaugurated. Most striking to the stranger are the antagonisms of the present day. Almost everything is in a state of metamorphosis, and it is curious to notice institutions of past centuries by the side of recent reforms. Through the ancient city gate electric cars are passing, and in the vicinity of the gabled pagoda can be seen the chimney of a factory. Day by day some Western institutions, customs, and [231] ideas are being adopted. It looks like gradual advancement.

XI

It is barely some decades since Korea opened her doors to foreigners, and even in this short time she has introduced innovations which have shaken her to her foundations, and I fear even greater changes are awaiting her in the near future. Her ancient suzerain, China, has retired from her political arena, but Japan has taken even stronger hold of the country than ever before, and a new element has been introduced into the field by the occupation by Russia of Manchuria and the Yalu. Such was the condition of the country when in 1894 the war broke out between China and Japan. Korea obtained her independence without participating in any way in the great fight. Her king became an emperor. But all these changes were only superficial. A new internal administration could not be consolidated in a few days, and Korea's independence is only on the protocol.

The freedom of Korea was, as we saw, proclaimed with great pomp just at the moment when she had the least chance of making use of that unexpected independence. Surrounded by enemies, she had neither the moral strength nor the military force to maintain it. She was bound to follow the advice of [232] one or the other of her neighbours; in fact, it was only by showing herself to be of no use to her allies that she could ensure her very existence. One day it was the Chinese, the next the Japanese, then the Russians. She has always been a mere instrument in the hands of these Powers. Their influence has changed very rapidly without any apparent cause. Which of her attachments has been the most sincere, who can say? The manifestations of both were

equally ostensible and complete, and the Koreans went so far as to proclaim their adherence by adopting the uniform of the favoured country for their soldiers, and the inhabitants of Seoul have had the pleasure of seeing their army parading the main streets first in the uniform of Cossacks, and then in that of Nippon.

Ever since the latter part of the nineties Japan has been showing remarkable activity. She has invested considerable capital in the country, opened banks, founded large commercial firms, built railways, and established a regular steamship service. She goes even farther and is endeavouring to instil fresh life into the people. She is trying to remodel the Korean government on Japanese principles. As to the army of (nominally) eighty thousand soldiers, of which nearly eight thousand are stationed in Seoul, it is being drilled by [233]
Japanese officers and supplied with European rifles and uniforms. Japan is establishing modern schools, and desires to transform young and old alike.

During my visit Russian influence contended with Japanese for the mastery, but in the midst of all these antagonistic fluctuations it is scarcely possible to speak of political convictions. The people dislike the Russians as much as they detest the Japanese. They resemble a man in danger of drowning, who stretches out his hand to his enemy, in the vain hope of not being submerged in the floods. Public men are divided into a great many parties and form different political groups. Some even belong to the most reactionary of the time, while others are more favourably disposed to progress, and all of them are open to conviction where personal advantage is concerned. If the dislike of foreign nations is intense, the hatred of their compatriots who are attached to other political factions is still greater. And when the national apathy and indolence are broken through by animosity to rivals, the people become blind to reason, cruel, and bloodthirsty. They have no self-control, as they have never been trained to a higher moral standard, and there is no education such as will develop their better qualities. Among all the puzzles of the present day in Korea, certainly the most important is how to bring up the rising [234]
generation. The conditions, not only of Korea but of the neighbouring states, being entirely changed, her old methods are of no practical use for the present situation. The future requires a different system. In order to face the difficulties of the present, they must bring up their children to be men; and I have been most interested to note how the children respond to a better method of training. During my stay in the country I visited again and again native, foreign, and missionary schools, and came to the conclusion that the Koreans are not lacking in the mental qualities which are required by our Boards of Education. I listened to boys of fourteen and fifteen, not only translating the classics as well as the children in our schools do, but, what was more exceptional, they showed a real pleasure in dealing with deeper questions, where logical thought and sequence of ideas were requisite. They like to study, and, to my great astonishment, I was told by the rector of our seminary that, during the vacations, many of the boys go on with the next year's course.

Their moral training is not very difficult either. The children are docile, obedient, and good-natured, and are most amenable to religious principles. Catechists have a high opinion of their catechumens, who take deep interest [235]
in theological doctrine. As a rule, they evince a real desire to be better acquainted with spiritual matters, and, if they become Christians, conscientiously adhere to their faith and observe the religious rites. All who have lived in Korea are of the same opinion—that this unexplored country and its backward people need before all cultivation and education, and it depends entirely on those who take this great work of development into their hands whether it shall become a flourishing land and its people happy or not. And in that case, instead of the country being the seat of disturbance and war, and the inhabitants mere instruments in the hands of their enemies, the land of the Morning Calm may deserve its name and become a guarantee for the commercial prosperity and the peace of the Far East.

Such was the general situation at the moment of the outbreak of the Japanese-Russian war.

XII

It is evident that Korea is yet incapable of self-government. She is dependent on one or the other neighbour. Since China fell out of the ranks of conquering Powers Japan has taken up arms as she did centuries ago. To-day it is she who is aiming at ruling Eastern Asia, as if it were her mission to awaken the [236]
peoples of Asia and to instil Western civilization into them. The movement is of great interest and of more import than we should dare to believe. Its significance is incalculable. Whether Japan will be the master who is to transform the Asiatic races is another puzzling problem. Already a considerable number of young Chinese are frequenting Japanese high schools

and colleges. Delegates are being sent from Pekin, at the expense of the Government, to Japanese commercial and industrial institutions to study and to become acquainted with modern ideas.

Korea is face to face with similar problems of transformation. Who is to secure her definite leadership—Japan or Russia? The present war is more than a boundary dispute; it means the old struggle between the white and yellow races for the hegemony of Asia. On whichever side success ultimately lies, on that of Russia or of Japan, let all those who know Korea and are interested in her fate, hope that the conquerors will fulfil the duties victory involves. The little country deserves that her rulers should earnestly study her conditions and seek to improve them. Even from a merely utilitarian standpoint it will prove a better policy to develop and help than to exploit to excess or to oppress her. It is just as important that her people, who ever since their infancy have been the victims of cruel foes and the prey of bad government, should be elevated to a higher standard. [237]

For those who like to gather knowledge, not only about the outward circumstances of foreign countries but also about their inner life, it will be of interest to know that in spite of their degradation Korea's people have preserved unimpaired the sensitiveness of their mind. They are by no means insensible to lofty ideas. They are even capable of showing some enthusiasm for higher ideals. There is hardly another nation in the East which evinces more sincere appreciation of Christian ethics and doctrines than the Koreans.

Scarcely half a century has passed since the first Roman Catholic priests began their work, and they already number about fifty parishes and over fifty thousand parishioners. The old religious hatred is gradually changing into sympathy. Recently a few orphanages were built where children, abandoned by their parents, are being brought up and trained for some useful vocation.

The people are beginning to conceive clearer ideas about Christian virtues, and those who see under what wretched conditions the missionaries live, in what poor huts they dwell, on what scanty fare they have to live—especially when they realize that these men have left their own families, homes, and their country to educate little orphans, to help the needy, and to nurse the sick, no matter of what creed or sect, be they pagans or worshippers of the sun or of ancestors—regard this self-sacrifice with an admiration which is general and sincere. [238]

For those who wish to form an estimate of the intellectual powers of a people, the missionary schools offer undoubtedly the greatest facilities. It is there that the natural inclinations, good or bad, find direct expression. Of all my surprising experiences in Korea—a country rich in surprises—nothing equalled my impressions of the new college and seminary at Yong-Sang. There young people of twelve to fifteen gave as precise answers to questions put to them as one could hear in the best European high schools. And there Korea's primitive children can express themselves fluently in classical Latin. It was interesting for me to get an insight into their capabilities and observe their industry. For hours they would pore over their books if the teacher would not call them away for recreation. With the inherited inclination of Oriental people for abstract sciences, they enter with delight and pleasure into any metaphysical question. I was delighted to hear how successful their training is, and how easy it is to form their minds. I saw young Korea in a new light. There I best realized the force of the maxim that the future of a nation lies in the potentialities of its youths and their sound bringing up. But education can be of value only when carefully founded on higher morality and guided by true religion. [239]

With such an education Chosen's children might hold in their hands one day their country's independence and prosperity.

Korea's exceptional geographical position, its natural wealth, and inborn physical strength, should tend to make her in the extreme Far East a sort of buffer state, and a bulwark of international good fellowship and established peace.

Nations, like individuals, have their moral codes and vocations. Nemesis must always overtake evil of every kind, and to the virtuous alone is granted the palm of victory.

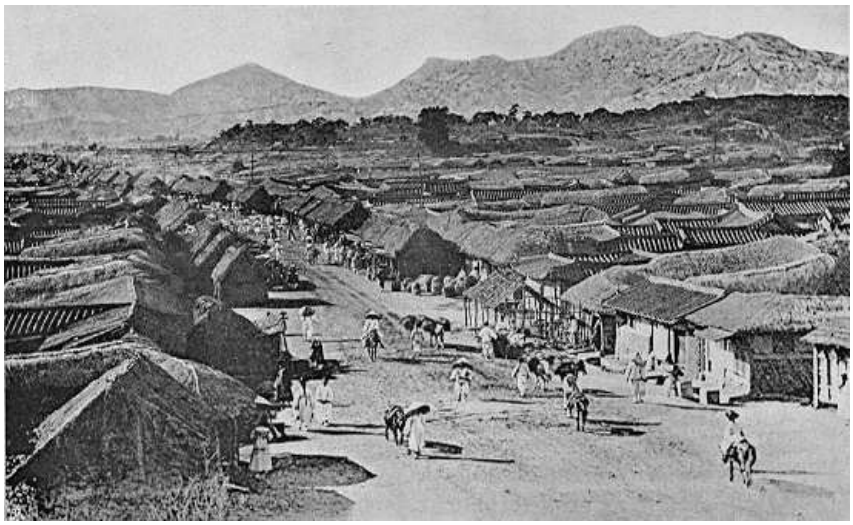
IX [240]

SEOUL, THE CAPITAL OF KOREA

I have arrived safely in Seoul. It is eventide, and the moon is just appearing. In the dimness the most desolate imperial residence in the world seems still more desolate, more wretched, miserable, and forlorn.

My sedan-chair is being carried through a long street, or rather road, of small houses—but houses they cannot be called: those I have seen up to the present can at the best be termed hovels.

At last we reach the walls of the inner city—for till now we have been merely in the outer town. The wall is ragged and thorny. In front stand a number of roofed and painted gates. I almost imagine myself back in Pekin, for the picture is a replica, but in miniature. I am, however, unable in the dusk to see how much smaller it is, only the general effect is the same, stamped with the familiar Chinese characteristics.



SEOUL
"The broad streets seem an immense cemetery, and the mean little flat-roofed houses graves"
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The moon is now shining brightly, but it shows nothing new in the aspect of the road within the walls. The main street of Seoul is as deep in clay and mud as it was at the time when the "waters dried up." Its houses have not altered; [241] they are scarcely more than the clay huts of prehistoric man, his protection against cold or heat.

The first sight of an unknown country stamps itself on our minds in a manner unique, and I requested the bearers of my chair to walk slowly, for I did not wish to lose my first impression. There is a fascination in the unknown—a wonderful interest attached to the unexpected. Our wanderings amongst strange peoples in the streets of a city which we have not visited before are not for the pen to describe.

Everything that is unknown is mysterious, until reality tears aside the veil, and so long as it is built up by our imagination and peopled by fantastic creations it remains to a certain extent a City of Dreams.

The streets are gradually getting broader, and the clay huts grow even more insignificant. I stop for a moment in the great square, which may be the centre of the city, but is little more than a cross-road leading into a few side-streets.

It is scarcely seven o'clock, and yet over all broods a death-like silence, a peaceful calm, as complete as one can imagine. The broad streets seem an immense cemetery, and the mean little flat-roofed houses graves. One might think it is All Saints' Day, for on each grave a little lamp is burning. A lantern hangs from the eaves of each roof, showing a yellowish flame. [242]

But the people themselves are returning like ghosts to their homes, each robed in white—each and all mute. Without a sound they flit over the roads of the endless graveyard, until they disappear into the depths of some one of the illuminated tombs.

I have never been so impressed by any other city I have seen as I was by my first sight of Seoul. As I saw the city just now, by the light of a November moon, dark, dumb, desolate, and ghostly, it resembled some fairy city more than reality; like those storied places sung of in the poetry of almost every people, the tale of which is listened to with such rapture by the little folk of the nursery, who know nothing as yet of life's seamy side.

Such a town was Seoul to me, the first few hours after my arrival.

Next morning I was aroused by the sound of drums and trumpets. But whose? Do they belong to the ghosts? What can have happened that the home of silence should have been disturbed by such an awful uproar?

I hasten to my window. The long street, the square, every inch of ground, is occupied by soldiers. These are short and yellow, wearing a black uniform, the black cloth of which, set off by a broad red collar and contrasted with the yellow faces, makes a motley colour-scheme, almost like a chequered field. [243] The men seem to like it. If the mixture serves no other purpose it offers an excellent target for an enemy, which was probably the idea of its inventors.

The din continues. The trumpets blare, and these black, red, and yellow little people, like tin soldiers, keep moving before me; to and fro, up one street and down another they go, like stage-property soldiers, now appearing on and again disappearing from the stage—always the same supers; but one would think they were a mighty army. And all the time the bayonets flash on the rifle-barrels, whose weight seems rather too much for the little men. The drums still beat, and fanfares ring out on the frosty morning.

What has happened? Has the coronation not been postponed after all? Is the Emperor at last inaugurating the long-awaited festivities?

I ring the bell, and a servant, dressed in white, and wearing a pigtail twisted up in a knot, enters. His long coat is of linen, his head covered by a hat of horsehair, which resembles in shape the wire lid used to protect preserves from flies.

This quaint servant seems more surprised at my question than I at his livery.

"But the army has been reorganized by European officers. It has been taught, in the Western style, to march, manœuvre, and kill, and for the performance [244] of this gay farce new taxes have been raised. And now you, a European, coming from the West, ask, with obvious irony, 'What does this all mean?'"

I can see how amusing the whole situation is, and what a ludicrous side it has. The fact of the collar being a few inches deeper, or of the colour of the tunic, does not alter the character of the uniform; it is still a distinctive mark, even in its best form, whether the mechanism which propels the bullet be new or old fashioned. The rifle always destroys, and whether a soldier is a couple of feet taller or not, whether he has a yellow or a white complexion, his calling is a rather gloomy one. For do we not consider that soldier most efficient who destroys the greatest number of lives?

Dawn now turns into morning, and the doors of the shops open one by one. Most of them are only protected for the night by mats or a few planks.

Later on the customers begin to arrive, all of them dressed in white. Men and women alike wear long linen coats (kaftans), and their lined foot-gear is also of linen; in fact, they are white from top to toe, excepting the black hat of horsehair.

Now and again I see a sedan-chair, which, however, is not larger than a good-sized box, its occupant huddled up inside. I cannot perceive any carriage, [245] trap, or horse, in spite of the growing traffic, which, however, is perfectly noiseless. Perhaps this may account for the fact of my still being under the impression of being in a deserted city.

It is generally on the first day that we catch the most characteristic traits, or, at any rate, that the most salient features strike our imagination. While our perceptive powers are still fresh, we are able to be impressed by the smallest peculiarities.

After breakfast I go out for a stroll, and find in front of me the palace gate, outside which some soldiers are standing. Beyond it stretches a long street, towards which I turn. This is the same thoroughfare which yesterday resembled a vast graveyard, but the houses now stand open, as the wooden wall, looking on the street, has been removed. There are a considerable number of shops, but small and mean, displaying no wares that attract my attention. Those of the cabinet-makers make the best show, consisting of small chests, inlaid with brass ornamentation, having large polished locks. These are no less quaint than they are tasteful. There seems to be a great demand for them, for in a whole row I can see nothing else. There is also no lack of fruit and seeds, but the baskets do not offer a quarter of the variety of a Chinese grocer. I do not think I saw any more shops, at least any that I [246] remarked. They seemed small and empty, never more than a couple of customers in them.

What especially attracted my attention was the large number of sentry-boxes. Every five or ten yards you came across a box, with a stubby black-red-and-

yellow soldier inside, armed!

No matter where I turn, there are sentry-boxes everywhere—to the right, to the left, in front and behind me. Can it be a fact that this army is required to keep these little folk in order?

* * * * *

No sooner had I put this question to myself than I became aware of a disturbance going on—some coolies, carrying vegetables, engaged in a battle royal, and two boys pitching into each other. But the private stands there unmoved. His look seems rather to approve than condemn. He is evidently not intended to keep the peace; this does not seem to be part of his duties; so the coolies may fight as much as they like among the cabbages. (The group, by the way, forms a pretty picture—the coolies in white, with the green loads on their backs, in the thick of the fray.) The smaller of the boys commences to cry, as blood is dripping from his forehead; but the soldier is not affected by the sight of this either. I wonder if what he just muttered was that the "Red Cross" was not his business. [247]

As I went on I heard more screaming and quarrelling, and witnessed a few more little skirmishes. It was not until now that I realized how unaccustomed I was to quarrels and fights, as in China I never saw one man fighting another —they have their thousands of years of civilization to thank for that.

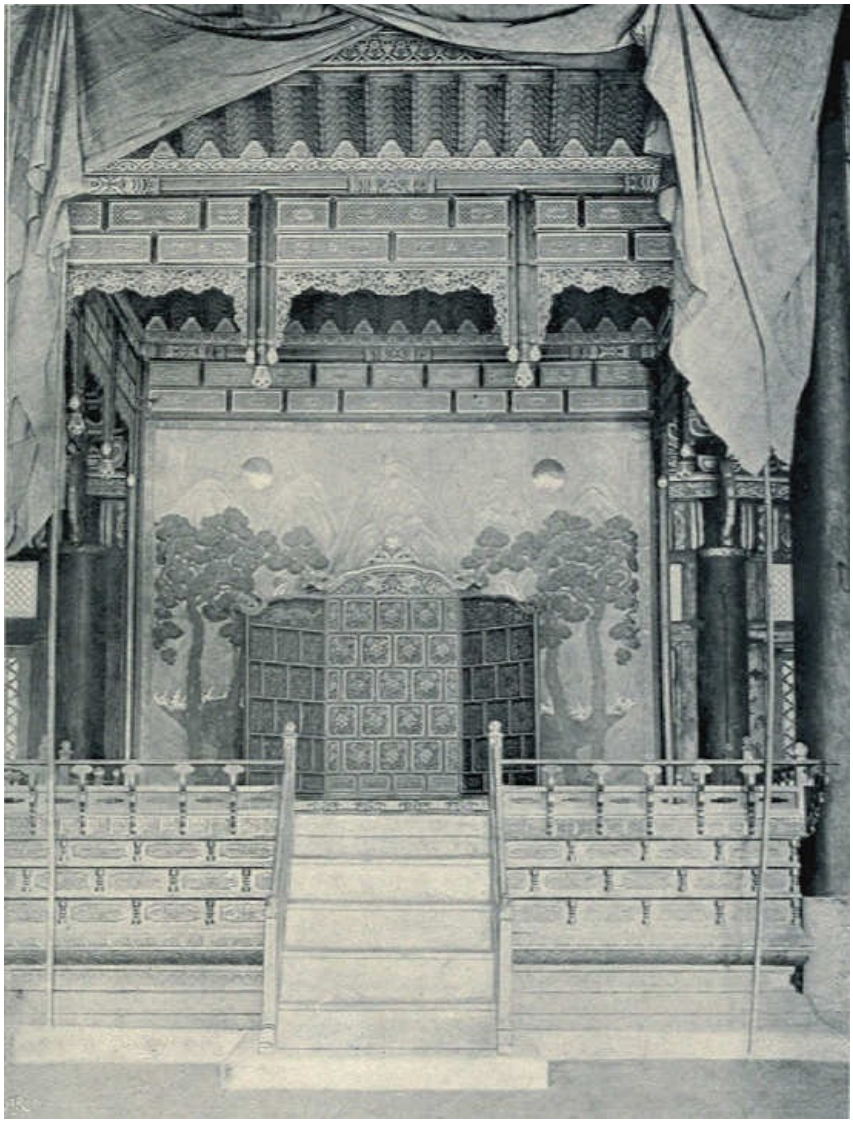
Later I approach a hall which is being repaired. It has a pointed roof and broad eaves, similar to those of the palace at Pekin.

A whole forest of wood is stored up there in the shape of beams. As I see with what precision the workmen make the various parts fit together, without the use of nails, I am delighted that the traditions of ancient architecture are not yet extinct.

I am now in the neighbourhood of the Royal Palace. In front of the main gate is a large square, which farther on turns into a street, with public buildings on either side. These are the Ministerial Offices, where is spun the web of the Korean Government.

Externally the palace has little to distinguish it. The façade is rather low, and the walls are mud-coated, while the gates are not much better, in the Chinese style, and crowned by tiles.

The gates, which are wide open, lead into a large inner courtyard, where there are a number of ordinary and state sedan-chairs. Crowds of servants, [248] attendants, and coolies, are warming themselves in the sun, others are playing at ball, which they kick off and catch with their legs.



THE EMPEROR'S THRONE IN THE OLD PALACE
"The throne is reached by a short flight of steps, and the canopy is of barbaric splendour"
[To face page 248]

In the middle of the street one meets mandarins hurrying to their offices, magistrates and other men of consequence, most of them in chairs, or rather boxes, carried by two servants. The vehicle is covered with a cloth, that of the better class matching in colour the servants' liveries. I have seen grey and yellow ones also. These belong to the Korean aristocracy.

The most attractive of all was the "carriage" of a noble in mourning. His chair had quite recently been covered with cloth of a yellowish hue, the same as that worn by his two servants, their coats reaching nearly to the ground. In order to give their limbs free play, these had been split up as far as the waist. But this can be nothing more than fashion, for not even the whip would make a Korean hurry. The servants also wear a broad girdle, tied up in a bow, round their waists.

When in mourning they wear straw hats, not black, but shaped like a fair-sized old-fashioned bread-basket. These have wide sloping brims, reaching the shoulders, and entirely concealing the face. In such a weird costume they strongly resemble yellow mushrooms sprung up on a summer's day. Straw sandals complete the costume. [249]

In spite of these strange details and absurd combinations, the general effect is good; the colours, the silk-covered chair, straw hat and sandals, blend harmoniously together. Seen from a distance, they almost have the appearance of ivory knick-knacks, such as you see exhibited for sale in Japanese curio shops.

But I hear a noise in the distance, and from the direction of the western gate a motley crowd comes towards me. It must be either a funeral or a wedding. So far I cannot distinguish which. The next moment two children detach themselves from the crowd and seem to lead the procession. Their dress is glaring, of green, purple, and scarlet silk, with their dark hair encircling their foreheads in gleaming plaits. They are also decked out with flowers and butterflies.

Behind them is carried a large box, painted red, and polished. It is evidently a wedding, and this is very likely the dowry. Now follow the dancers, in pairs, but wide apart from each other. Their costume—I cannot describe it! Almost shapeless, it consisted of skirt over skirt, kerchiefs, veils, all pell-mell and of every colour of the rainbow.

I take note of many things which to-morrow might escape me.

Street life is one ever-flowing stream. In Seoul, I observe, everybody lives on the thoroughfares, and this is probably the reason why the roads are so wide and the dwellings so cramped. In this trait the Korean is like the Spaniard or Italian, for he is never so happy as when out of doors. There he stands on his threshold, or basking in the sunny courtyards; or he lights his pipe and strolls up and down for hours. His carriage is slow and stately. I wonder where he is going, and what he is thinking of—nowhere and of nothing. I should say, "Il flâne." There is no suitable word in another language for this aimless meandering. "Loitering" indicates only physical slowness, nor does even "to lounge or saunter" exactly convey the idea. Physical sluggishness and moral vacuum are not simultaneously connoted by them. [250]

Now and again a private comes by. He is the coming man! If he learns nothing else in the barrack-yard, he certainly does learn how to walk.

His pigtail has been shorn off. At first he bemoaned it, for this antiquated head-dress of his embodied a general principle, and with its departure he was cut adrift from all his old associations and traditions; but, like the child he is at heart, he soon forgets his pigtail and its traditions along with it, and today is proud of the metamorphosis.

As the man of progress and of the future, he scorns the white coats, sandals, and hats, of his countrymen. [251]

On reaching the hotel I find a gentleman awaiting me; it is the Minister of Great Britain. He has learnt of my arrival, and is come to offer me his hospitality, my country not having a legation in the city.

The Hôtel du Palais in Seoul is new and fairly well managed, and so I did not wish to put any one to inconvenience. The bishop being away, and having no legation, I was anxious to remain my own master. We never know when we may become a nuisance to the kindest of hosts. The pleasantness of a visit, after all, depends more on circumstances than on the host or guest.

All this I frankly explained, and in the end we made a compromise in such a way as not to disturb our daily programme. I was to be his guest, but each of us was to attend to his usual occupations, and we were to meet only at luncheon time. As for the afternoons, we left everything to circumstances.

The British Legation, on the other side of the new palace, is a pretty country mansion, with a loggia, built on a bank, and enclosed by a garden. The secretary's house stands in another part of the grounds, and at the entrance a pavilion for the guards is in course of construction.

The interior is typically English, the same as we find it in the houses of the well-to-do classes, whose root principle is, "My home is my castle." Among those with whom the family life is such a fine example of domestic virtues, the "home" strikes us very forcibly and with such graciousness. Indeed, the "home" idea is one of Great Britain's bulwarks. [252]

My room was ready for me, bright and cheerful. The creeper on the balcony was still green, and my windows looked out on to the courtyard of the neighbouring palace.

In the afternoon I went to the German Consulate, and passed on the way the Temple of Heaven—a pagoda standing on a hill, with a fair double roof and in front of it a marble altar.

It is a replica, a poor one it is true, of Pekin's masterpiece, but quite pretty from a scenic point of view.

From a small house at the corner a very babel of sound issues forth. It is the inarticulate mechanical repetition of one chapter—exactly the same method our own schoolmasters used to employ for instilling knowledge.

As the door in the courtyard is open, I enter. In front of me I find a room, not more than ten feet square, in which ten or more youngsters are crowded together. There they sit on the floor, dressed green instead of white, and their long hair hanging down in fine plaits.

THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY IN SEOUL
"One of those charming buildings full of originality"
[To face page 252]

Each has a big A B C book in his hand. Every word has a different letter; these they repeat, and in this way knowledge is driven into them. They pronounce everything out loud, moving the upper part of their body to right and left, backwards and forwards, all the time. [253]

The dominie is seated in front, also squatting on the floor. His eyes are shielded by goggles of enormous size, and he wears on his head a horsehair crown.

He is wisdom personified, outwardly at any rate, and his thoughts seem to be ranging far away in the distance; and from his Olympic seat he casts an indifferent eye on his perspiring pupils. But, as a famous Chinese pedagogue says, "Chinese spelling and writing can only be mastered mechanically; the best scholar is the jackass."

The German Consulate is a new building, but by no means as comfortable as the English. The Consul-General is also entrusted with Austro-Hungarian affairs, and would look after them if there were any to look after. But I am afraid that the Viennese Foreign Office of the present régime does not quite realize the commercial interests which it might promote, and follows strictly the advice of the late Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ct. Kálnoky, given to an enthusiastic youth, "If you want to succeed in your career and maintain your position when once acquired, do not forget 'On n'est jamais en disgrace pour ce qu'on n'a pas fait.'" He is very courteous, and talks a good deal of Japan, where he acted as Councillor of the Legation. [254]

From there to the Roman Catholic Mission is but a few yards. As I enter its iron grilled gate, my surprise is as great as it is agreeable, for I see before me a grand cathedral, and on either side spacious buildings standing in their own wooded grounds.

It was built on the model of one of the old cathedrals in the Netherlands—red brick, Gothic, a style which, as I invariably avow, I do not like to find in the East. But this is only a criticism due to my artistic sense. As a building, nothing can be said against it, for of its kind it is perfect. But what struck me most was its cleanliness. The stone floor was as bright as a mirror.

The bishop was away on circuit, and would not return for ten days, so Father ——, the vicar, received me, and showed me over the whole little colony, the school, and convent and orphanage; but of these I will speak more fully elsewhere.

As I took my leave the sun was setting. The peaks of the encircling hills were reflected in purple tints on the topaz sky. The Mission down below, in the dell, appeared in a bluish mist, only the cathedral cresting the hill.

Returning home by a circuitous route, I find the streets even more thronged than in the morning. I glance into a few shops, but there is not much worth seeing. The furriers, who are engaged in cutting out and sewing a number of tunics, capes, and fur coats, seem to be the busiest. There are also a good many jackets and still more waistcoats without sleeves to protect the chest [255]

and back. Over these are worn white linen kaftans. No wonder the wearers look like walking eider-down quilts.

To the right I noticed a tavern, much like the Chinese roadside inn, and in the large open stable a row of small rough-haired horses were standing with straw rugs on their backs. A coolie was carrying water from the well in two brass vessels, hanging on the ends of a long pole. The pole does not, however, rest upon his shoulders, but is fastened crosswise to his back, giving man and load the appearance of a living pair of scales.

Next come some unpretentious little barracks, which, in their smallness, are after the pattern of the soldiers, a number of whom are looking out of the windows. In the absence of any better occupation, they are chewing pumpkin-seeds.

Now we arrive at the curiosity shops displaying several porcelain articles, a few of bronze, many tiles, and a farrago of rubbish.

On the cross-road are some more barracks, comprised in a long low building, the little men in front of which were wearing, not only red collars, but also [256] red dolmans. Here the cavalry are garrisoned, and a little scrap of a hussar is just galloping home. This warrior is not a whit taller than Hop o' my Thumb, his charger scarce larger than a well-developed calf of two months.

By the side of this toy hussar rattled a formidable sabre, which seemed in danger of pulling him down from his horse.

Without that impediment his seat is poor enough. On his coming nearer I see that the murderous instrument is an ordinary cavalry sword. His uniform is the most chequered I ever saw. The dolman of the Korean hussar is of a cinnamon colour, his collar and cuffs emerald-green, and his breeches stripes saffron. If the pattern of his uniform was the plumage of a parrot, the imitation is indeed most successful.

I was wandering farther on, when in front of a gate some dogs nearly knocked me down.

The streets of Seoul, like those of Pekin and Constantinople, are full of them, but with this difference, that the dogs here are well-kept and strong. If a single one of these starts barking, this signal of some approaching danger is in a minute responded to throughout a whole quarter. It was so in my case. As I came too near the threshold, the guardian on duty there was under the impression that I intended to encroach on his domain. His attitude towards [257] me was anything but friendly, and not being armed with either stick or umbrella, I instinctively stooped down to pick up a stone. This movement on my part, however, was sufficient to make him retire summarily into his own courtyard. He was perfectly in the right, and it only showed what a faithful watch-dog he was.

The Korean canine race is a subject worthy of a few words, because it affords some of the most typical figures in the streets of Seoul. I must confess I never have seen better-trained dogs than these. In the streets they are the meekest of quadrupeds, and as quiet as lambs.

A single word is quite sufficient to make the Seoul dog scamper home to his doorway. He knows that it is his duty to be there. He will lie in the little yard for hours and hours, but prefers, best of all, to take his ease on the doorstep, with his head in the street, so as not to lose sight of any one approaching. He hardly takes any notice of you, as long as you walk in the middle of the road. At most he would stare at dark-clothed people with other than yellow faces, to the sight of whom he is not accustomed, for ever since he came into this world he has seen none other than white kaftans.

But the moment any stranger directs his steps towards the house, the dog gives a growl or two, and on further approach barks as loud as he can. He [258] reserves his attack until you are within his range, that is to say about a yard from him. By that time the auxiliary forces from the neighbourhood have concentrated, and you have the whole brigade snarling and yapping at your heels.

This fearsome pandemonium at last brings the master of the house, or a member of his family, to the seat of the disturbance, and a single word, or merely a sign, suffices for Cerberus to retire to a corner, wagging his tail.

* * * * *

Darkness has set in. Calm reigns supreme. The fresh autumnal night is silently spreading its grey veil of mist over the white city. But look! is not that the northern light breaking through the dark? In the direction of Puk-Han it begins to dawn. The sky unexpectedly flashes up; its subdued red light is

getting more and more brilliant. Now flames of hundreds of torches illuminate the atmosphere. Here is another surprise, as if the many strange phenomena of the day had not yet reached their climax.

It is a torchlight procession, the like of which I have never seen before. Pedestrians, sedan-chairs, men on horseback, are coming forward in an endless string. And what a pageant this is! What effective grouping! The minutest detail has been carried out with artistic taste. The smallest traits are [259] wonderfully harmonized, to enhance the general effect.

The procession is headed by children, dressed in white from top to toe, wearing bell-shaped head-gear. Then follow bearers of torchlights and banners, servants carrying inscriptions attached to poles, others dangling lanterns, and behind these another group burning straw plaits.

The next section of the procession consists of riders, of whom eight are entirely covered by white cloaks. You would imagine they were phantoms, if it were not that they are weeping bitterly. These are the paid mourners, like the moaning women of ancient Rome; for it is a native funeral. A member of the Min family is being taken to his last resting-place. He is a descendant of a famous clan, a relative of the late Empress of Korea, so regal pomp is awarded him. And the funeral procession is really grand, although all dresses worn therein are of unbleached linen. The trimmings are for the most part of paper, but in such striking combinations, and designed and finished so perfectly, that we disregard the details and only admire the general effect. The group of moaning women is followed by monsters, dressed as guys, such as gruesome fables are peopled with. One wears a red, another a yellow, mask; this a green, and that a blue one. The appearance of all is awe-inspiring, their heads being adorned with horns, cockscombs, and crowns. [260] Now more and more new groups follow, approaching in a stately way, and disappearing slowly in the darkness of the night.

How long the procession lasted I could not ascertain, but some thousand persons must have marched by ere the two gilt catafalques appeared on the scene. Both were alike, resembling monumental pagodas, gabled in many places, designed with the quaint originality of this people, and ornamented with all the fullness of their fancy. The two coffins, prescribed by ancient traditions, rest on pedestals in the shadow of high baldachinos. Behind the coffin walks a person wrapped in sackcloth, suggestive of the cloth worn over their uniforms by members of the society of the Misericordia in Italy. The catafalques and coffins are carried on their shoulders by thirty-two mourners, proceeding slowly and rhythmically.

But the pageant is not yet at an end. On a number of sedan-chairs are heaped up the personal belongings of the deceased. His clothes, household furniture, horses, and cows, all follow him, so that they may be consumed as a burnt-offering by his grave-side; all in *effigy*, for they are but of paper. It is in such cheap counterfeit that the ancient traditions are being preserved by the more practical progeny of the present day. The silver coins, thrown by the riding [261] "weepers" amongst the crowd, are likewise make-believe, being really nothing but small discs of paper. One sedan-chair follows another; hosts of carriers and servants accompany the members of the family. There is the whole tribe; a whole brigade is riding behind the gabled catafalque. All are covered with sackcloth; even the mendicant is dressed in white—the whole procession is white. And as they turn round at the top of the hill, the effect of the picture is unique. The weeping women, the monsters, the mourners and attendants, the gigantic catafalques, and the immense crowd, formed one of the strangest sights I ever contemplated. The furled banners, dangling inscriptions, open sunshades, lanterns with dim lights in the darkness of the night, formed the quaintest setting. The light of torches, the burning bunches of bulrushes and straw, are tinting in a vibrating red the long, white and ghostly procession. The beating of drums, and the droning of bagpipes, furnish the music, and the weeping women the proper chorus. This strange funeral, in fact, is the most perfect "danse macabre."

The full moon, fuller than usual, as though anxious to light up the weird procession, is rising in a slow and stately manner behind the hills. Her melancholy rays filter through the night, her silvery splendour intensifying [262] the ghostliness of the scene.

* * * * *

The first day spent in the capital of Korea is nearing its end. Quietness penetrates the night—such profound quietness as can only be enjoyed in Seoul. The alley leading to the legation is dark and deserted. And as I walk home I try to recall to my memory all that I have perceived and heard; all that was new to me and striking; all the contrasts and the incoherency of earliest perceptions.

No guests were bidden to dinner, and when my host put the question to me, "What do you think about Seoul?" I was scarcely able to express my thoughts clearly. What do I really think about Seoul? What about her people, her life, physiology, and atmosphere? I will write it down forthwith, ere *knowledge* spoils the glamour of first impressions, whilst every tint is shining in glaring colour, whilst every detail can be observed through the microscope of novelty.

On the last day of my sojourn here, I will look through these short notes, and, like a schoolmaster, correct in red ink any mistakes that may be found therein. Town and people will then be better known, but the charm of the first day will vanish for ever.

X [263]

THE EMPEROR OF KOREA AT THE NEW PALACE

Since last night we have been in the midst of revolution; but it seems that a revolution in Korea is very much like everyday life in other corners of the earth, and nobody attaches any importance to it. Everybody pursues his daily task, the ordinary routine goes on in its slow and lumbering way. Official life maintains its sluggish pulsation, and to my astonishment I even get an invitation to be received in the course of the afternoon by the Emperor and the Crown Prince.

It is a calm day, calm in every respect, and the people of Seoul seem to be at rest, as I am carried by eight unusually large bearers towards the New Palace. The little *cortège* is of a strange character. My sedan-chair is covered with green silk, and, with the bearers in dark purple, makes quite a patch of colour in the whitewashed streets.

Seoul might be called the white city. The houses are white, and every living being, young and old, man and woman, is clad in white cotton. I should really think that the absence of colour and sound is the most striking feature of the [264] Land of the Morning Calm.

The reception takes place at the New Palace. There are four palaces in Seoul, the Eastern, Northern, Western, and the one I am just entering. I have passed a great many delightful afternoons in their magnificent grounds, forlorn gardens, quaint summer-houses, and charming pagodas.

I returned again and again to sketch for a while, or to admire the once-famous Korean art, which, I am afraid, has vanished for ever, like the famous bronze-workers, sculptors, and cloisonné makers, like the whole once-famous civilization that has left only a few magnificent monuments of its existence.

The sedan-chairs are put down before the main entrance, which looks very much like that of a suburban railway station, with its glass roof, supported by iron posts. It is modern indeed. It may be useful, but it is sadly commonplace. There is a platform, too, not to miss anything to complete the *tout ensemble*.

I am shown first into an ante-room which might be that of any small country villa, and our coats are hung on racks which have every appearance of having come straight from Tottenham Court Road. And then we step into a drawing-room, which I prefer to call a waiting room, an exact replica of those dreary places where we are compelled to waste so many hours of our lives. It might [265] belong to a dentist, a doctor, or a public official at home.

In the centre there is a huge table with the kind of books which nobody ever dreams of reading. The furniture is featureless, but not altogether unpretentious, and the engravings and pictures are of a sort that nobody cares for. I was told by way of compliment to the West that the Court arranged this apartment for foreign receptions, and I wonder if it was entirely without sarcasm or pardonable malice that visitors are confronted with a room that makes all the faults of modern Western taste so manifest. It was a climax of all that is banal.

Whilst waiting we are entertained by His Excellency the Master of Ceremonies, the Lord Chamberlain, and several A.D.C.'s. They all wear European uniforms, dark marine-blue tunics, with many black and gold badges and heavily braided dark red trousers. Everything is of the best material and highly finished, apparently made far beyond Korea's frontiers. Some of the officials talk French, some English, and all are most interesting and entertaining. They have charming manners and all the natural refinements of an ancient race.

Two of them are old acquaintances. I met them years ago at Buckingham Palace, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Prince Min is an [266] accomplished man of the world. He has just built a new house on the outskirts of the city, "with all the most modern improvements," but I am rather sorry he has left his old home, lost in the maze of the inner town and buried in the shade of a few fine chestnut trees. It was such a typical old Korean home, looking outside like a hut built of mud and covered with thatch, but inside looking like a white paper box. Its tiny rooms were carpeted with silky matting, and for furniture it had half a dozen silk cushions—for ornamentation, but a single flower stand.

There is a striking contrast between this modern waiting-room and the old Korean house; a contrast of vulgarity and refinement. I am sorry to say I saw only a few of these quaint old places, and I fear that on my next visit they will all have disappeared. To pass the time, tea, champagne-cup, and cigarettes, are handed round, as they would be in any Western house.

The New Palace and its diplomatic receptions are managed by a Western lady.

There are some other Westerners holding Court appointments here, some with the title of teacher of languages, and many others under different pretexts. But few of them render services that are ever required.

The building of this New Palace is unquestionably strange and antagonistic, [267] but I will confine myself to observing the material sides. Its conception and architecture are equally incoherent; it is such an unintelligible mixture of old and new, national and foreign. Near the hall, built exactly like an old yamen, there stands a shed of corrugated iron, and a wonderful old gate leads to a passage furnished with Viennese chairs. The whole palace was built as opportunity offered, without previous plans. It came to be erected in the following way. During the last revolution, the Empress lost her life: she was dragged out of her room, atrociously tortured, and stabbed by ruffians, or, as some say, by foreign soldiers. Afterwards, her body was burned in the adjoining deer park, at the foot of the eastern hills. The Emperor himself escaped only with the greatest difficulty, in a disguise, carried on men's shoulders, as Anchises was out of the burning ruins of Troy. He never returned to those ill-fated walls, but took refuge in the Russian Legation, and remained there for a long time to be in greater security.

After this, land was secured near the legations, amidst the foreign settlement, and there the New Palace was erected. It is not completed yet, and I am afraid it will remain unfinished for many years, and offer a source of income to the commercial, trading, labouring, and idling classes of the country. [268]

At last His Majesty awoke from his siesta and was ready to receive me. There are no ushers and no Court functionaries, and little or no display. The servants who came with the message wore a red calico kaftan to the ground, with a red calico hood that looked like a domino. It is the Court livery, simple to make and cheap to buy. Calico is the national material, that everybody wears at all seasons of the year—in winter padded with cotton-wool or sheepskin. There are over 10,000,000 purchasers of calico in Korea, and it has become quite an interesting commercial question whether Japan's Osaka or England's Manchester will secure the future market.

By a little door and through a narrow passage, built of white deal boards, we get to the inner court, which is really a backyard surrounded by store-rooms and servants' sheds.

THE THRONE ROOM
"Since the revolution, in which the Empress lost her life, the Emperor has never returned there"
[To face page 268]

To avoid the mud it is necessary to use a pathway composed of two planks. They are narrow enough to test the skill of an equilibrist, and it may be they are put down to drill the courtiers in that useful art. On this occasion these planks are covered with narrow bright red carpet—a poor specimen of the thing usually found in "furnished apartments," not at all conducive to comfort, and apparently only a harbour for the dust. The yard is deserted. Here and [269] there, out of peep-holes and half-open doors, a few red-calicoed servants are gazing with inquisitive eyes, but not one of them is in attendance.

From the central building a wide, unpainted door leads into the yard. The door is open and we see a kind of hall, with its walls covered with a large-patterned blue-and-white paper, which probably lay for years neglected and unadmired in some mean shop. There is a table in the centre and a high screen behind. Squeezed in between the two stands the Emperor. I can hardly realize that I am in the presence of the all-powerful potentate—an Emperor who is more than ruler, and more even than despot, in fact, an idol in the eyes of his people. His person is sacred, his power is boundless, his word is law, and he owns everything, land and people, without restriction, his simple wish is a command.

If human hand touches him it is sacrilege, and the punishment for sacrilege is death. Even the dead body of an emperor must be lifted into the coffin by a special device. If the Emperor touches a subject, the body so touched becomes blessed. The Emperor's name must not be mentioned except in whispers. His portrait is never painted except after death, when it becomes an object of worship in the ancestral halls. Once a foreign envoy sought to [270] present the Emperor with the portrait of his sovereign, but the Minister for Foreign Affairs regarded the offer as an outrage and the portrait was never accepted. How very strange all these customs seem to be! But it is scarcely thirty years since Korea was still, if not the "Land of the Morning Calm," at least the "Hermit Kingdom," secluded and unknown.

THE EMPEROR OF KOREA
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My impression of the Emperor is favourable. His features are heavy, but the face is kind and his expression is benevolent. Physically he is delicate. I cannot imagine him to be a man of strong likes or dislikes, and his shyness approaches timidity. He wore ancient Korean state robes of rich yellow hue, embroidered with numberless cabalistic signs. Around his waist was clasped a stiff ceremonial girdle, inlaid with jade. It looked much like an iron hoop round a shrunken barrel and seemed peculiar to Western eyes, accustomed to belts that, on the contrary, grip the body only too closely.

The representative of my country, who has lived for many years in Korea, and is an excellent scholar, had scarcely time to make the necessary introductions before the Emperor opened the conversation. He was most interested in the way I had come, and hearing that I had used the overland route, his questions were inexhaustible. "When did you leave home?"

"How long have you been travelling?" "What interested you most?" "What is the country like?" "What do the people do?" "What are their ambitions?" and so on. He seemed to be interested in my own country, and especially in all the different manners and customs of the West. [271]

"Is your country a very hilly one?" "Are the people agricultural, as here?" "Is your capital a very fine one, and what is the Emperor's palace like? I hear there are magnificent Court functions, and pageants with a great many carriages. My envoys, coming home from the European tour, gave me very interesting details of your magnificent cities and great wealth, and brought home many valuable souvenirs and pictures. I am sorry to be too old, otherwise I myself would start to see all I have heard about."

The state coaches seemed to appeal most to his imagination, which, after all, is but natural, considering that such a thing as a carriage has never been known to the Koreans. His Majesty even expressed a wish to order one in

Europe.

Question after question came, giving me scarcely time to give answers. I, of course, could not ask questions except in an indirect way, for in this respect Korea sticks firmly to the etiquette of all Courts, which provides that the monarch alone is allowed to start a new topic of conversation.

"You must have been very glad on your arrival at Seoul to find that the finest [272]
building is your cathedral? What it must have been to have built up such a high tower! and I am told its interior is beautiful. Who was your architect? How much did it cost?" I explained that it was built by one of the fathers who studied with great care the architectural books of Viollet Le Duc, and that the expense had been very limited, on account of nearly everything being made on the spot.

But he was even more interested to hear about our orphan schools close by, where nearly two hundred children are saved from misery and death. He was pleased to hear a little more of what happens outside the palace gates, to know something more about the charitable work carried out in his own country.

It was astonishing to see with what keen interest he followed my explanations.

He wanted to know my ideas concerning Koreans, and especially Korean children and the rising generation trained in our schools. I was glad to have an opportunity of expressing my satisfaction, and I told him how very much surprised I was at seeing the Korean children at work, and hearing their answers.

I could scarcely believe that boys out here could be such good Latin scholars, some of them far in advance of boys of the same age in European schools. I was even more astonished to see the real pleasure it gave them to study and [273]
to improve. To me it shed quite a new light on the Korean character and mind. What is more satisfactory still is, that when these children go back to their forlorn homes, as they do for several months each year, they seldom fail to return, and never forget what they have been taught.

Next the Emperor sat the Crown Prince, a man slightly over thirty years of age, overgrown and heavy, apathetic, and lethargic in all his movements. He shows little interest in anything outside his own sphere, and scarcely any capacity for the reception of new ideas. He is married, but has no family.

But there is a younger brother who is in every respect the reverse. He is bright, clever, active, and instead of the heavy atmosphere of the palace seeks the fresh air of far-away countries; At present he is in the United States, working hard, studying and gathering knowledge, experience, and statesmanship, which may, as he hopes it will, be of use to himself and to his country.

Behind the Emperor and Crown Prince stands a huge dark figure, casting a heavy black shadow on them. His expression is stolid, and he is mute, but he watches and follows everything that goes on around us. He is the chief eunuch of the palace, a man of great importance and influence. [274]

The chamberlains and princes accompany me to my sedan-chair when I go. Before I leave them they make an appointment for next day to show me the ancestral hall and some of the public buildings.

I must say they are all very courteous, and want to show me much that they think would prove useful to me. At last we start, sedan-chairs begin to swing, hanging from eight bearers' shoulders. A horseman rides ahead, while the legation servants and the Kisos form a guard. As we come to the large place before the palace there is a dense crowd, a faction of the revolutionists as I am told. The city is in great excitement. As we pass along we meet crowds everywhere.

Seoul is divided into two parties. One is bitter against Russia and claims the delivery and punishment of Y.-Yung-Yk, on whom all the Imperial confidence and favours are bestowed at this moment. Another party is in favour of him and Russia. The former is for Japan—but there is no party to support their own country, to work for its independence, and to secure its freedom. There seem to be very few Koreans for Korea.

XI [275]

As the train stops at the terminus of Shimbashi, I can scarcely realize that I have reached the capital of beautiful Japan. The huge station is one of the most commonplace erections I have ever come across in my long journeys. Platforms, booking offices, waiting rooms, are perfect copies of all that the Western mind has produced to be useful, but from an artistic point of view featureless and colourless. And even the crowd, which bustles along and overflows the whole place, is as drab as it could be in any commercial centre on our side of the globe. Even those who still cling to the national *kimono*, instead of keeping to the old bright colours, have it made of dark cloth or modern cotton material. As I step out into the street my disappointment is even greater. I see a few buildings constructed of wood, without any ornamentation, the unpainted timber grey and weather-beaten.

I must say the day is very much against the creation of a favourable impression. It is a cold January morning, gloomy and dark, sleet falling from leaden clouds, and the streets are thickly covered with black mud. I can [276] almost imagine myself in the suburbs of Pittsburg, for there is a great deal of smoke, the only apparent difference being that steel is replaced mostly by timber. As my jinrickshaw rolls along through the maze of wide streets and narrow lanes, I do not feel elated. My extraordinary vehicle, which is drawn by two men harnessed tandem fashion and pushed by another, has, however, an Eastern flavour, though the 'rickshaw was actually invented by an Anglo-Saxon genius.

During the first weeks of my stay I visited all the ancient monuments, temples, and pagodas, and all the usual haunts of the traveller. There are some fine specimens of Japanese art, though they cannot be compared to the buildings of the smaller cities. I come from Nara and Kyoto, and this may be one of the reasons that everything is so far below my expectations. Some of the temples are certainly large, and one or two pagodas quaintly designed, many of the carvings being elaborate. But even the best specimens can only be classed as decorative art. Among them all, the most noteworthy examples of Japanese architecture are the temples dedicated to the memory of the Shōguns. The decoration of the inner halls is sometimes exquisite, the beams and friezes being beautifully worked. Bronzes, finely cast, magnificently finished, make the interiors delightful. I specially admired the specimens of [277] lacquer-work I saw in the course of my rambles. Nearly all the temples had panels, doors, chests, boxes, utensils, and odds and ends of exceptional beauty. It takes a long time for a Western eye to appreciate fully the real qualities of good lacquer; but when once it has been trained it will always put their lacquer-work foremost among the artistic productions of this people next to bronzes, if not before them. The industry still survives in full vigour, and I saw several specimens which came very near those in the carefully guarded collection of Nikko. I also saw many fine bronzes, though their beauty is often depreciated by the too-great elaborateness of the design. Old national armour is to be found in many of the temples and collections of the capital, but, though most beautiful, it is not yet in much demand in the bric-à-brac market.

But I have come to the conclusion that the real charm of ancient Yeddo must have lain more in nature than in art, in its bright suburbs, evergreen groves, wistaria-covered arbours, and chrysanthemum gardens; nature in her exuberance, in her spring bloom, or the varied tints of autumn intermingled with arched bridges, carved balustrades, and flights of steps, relieved by art. Monuments in Japan seem to serve above all as a foreground to a fine view: the most conspicuous towers, ex-voto lanterns, or finest "tories," acquire an [278] artistic value more from their surroundings than from their intrinsic worth. The way in which the monuments are placed, the effect they give to the landscape, and especially the view to be seen from them, are the main points of interest. I am sorry that books written on Japanese art generally fail to perceive its real value, and point out merits it does not possess. It is particularly the imagination that ought to be dwelt on; not merely the handiwork, but the conception of the brain. Shrines, kiosks, pagodas, may sometimes be very primitive, but in the imagination of the artist they represented fairy buildings. It is the same with their tiny little gardens, or dwarf woods. Though they are in reality minute, they grow in the owners' minds to veritable parks or virgin forests. Some of the so-called Imperial palaces around Nikko are most humble abodes, surrounded by a little strip of land. Katsura-no-Rikyu Palace, for instance, consists simply of a few planks nailed together, forming a kind of log house of one storey, a few feet square, and divided in the interior by partitions or the so-called sliding screens. Certainly it is no palace; it can scarcely be called a house. It is literally a shed roofed with bamboo and thatch,—nothing more. And yet the followers of the imaginative school of æsthetics saw it with different eyes. To them it

represented what their fancy imagined, not what they saw in reality, and the little open space before the building, which, with the best will in the world, can only be called a gravel yard, dotted with unhewn stones, was to them the illimitable surface of the ocean, the scattered blocks so many islands and continents. In the corner stands a little estrade of bamboo, where the Mikado and his chosen friends used to sit in deep contemplation before the elaborate world of their fancy, and enjoy the passive happiness of the Zen doctrine. [279]

It would interest me to treat this subject most explicitly, and to deal with Japanese art from a psychological point of view; to consider not merely the objects it has created, but rather the mind and genius which have been manifested in its different creations; to deal more at length with the founders and pupils of the famous masters' schools of Nara and Kyoto, and to explain where their real value lies. To discuss the paintings, statuary, and architecture, the refinement of their watercolours, which can only be called sketches, small bronzes and jade or stone figures, the netsukes on masks, makimonos, "tories" and pagodas, would afford to our matter-of-fact appreciation an opportunity of realizing more fully the strength of their imagination. The average European generally admires in Japanese work the finish of detail, elaborateness of execution, and the patience of labour, applied to its object. He pays high prices for the workman's skill and manual dexterity, but seems to be quite indifferent to the artist's idea as such, and the originality of the conception escapes him entirely. [280]

Yet in the most famous creations of the celebrated æsthetes we are more struck by the force of their imagination than by the actual work itself. The *cha-no-yu* style consisted, as mentioned above with reference to the Katsura-no-Rikyu Palace, of a few planks, bamboo beams, and thatched roof, and Kobori Enshu, Nippon's Le Notre, designed his gardens to offer a panoramic effect more than a place of recreation. It was not the house nor the grounds in their real grandeur which effected the impression desired; in fact, it was not reality at all that was before them in its crude and sometimes primitive material; but the suggestiveness of log house and gravel yard, which developed in their vivid fantasy into enchanted palace and fairy land. Men retiring from active life; generals crowned with many victories; distinguished, even abdicating Mikados, secluded themselves in different rural retreats to enjoy, after the struggles of life, perfect peace. They led a life of their own, an existence not so much of active reality as of passive contemplation, in which they discussed different ideas and strove for new ideals. They invented an artificial life of artistic refinement, admiring for days together a single work of art or a flower in full bloom, inhaling choice aromas and smelling exquisite perfumes. And stately processions were organized to go and partake of afternoon tea in a summer-house, where every movement was prescribed by strict etiquette, and where the handing and receiving of the cup were attended by fastidious courtesies, and the making of the beverage of a special green leaf, pounded to powder, and poured out of a black earthen pot, was an occupation requiring several hours. The tea ceremonies have often been described; there is a whole literature at our disposal, in which the regulations respecting these proceedings are put down with the authority of a code. But what is far more interesting than the description of the elaborate ceremonies is the problem of how the mind of the people could have manifested itself in such a complex and, to us, incomprehensible way. We shall never fully realize how these men could have sat on the *Tsuki-mi-dai*, the bamboo dais, for hours, watching the moon rising behind the meadows, gazing at the scene before them, lost in the intricacy of their contemplation. And we shall never understand their thoughts as we shall never realize the world as seen from a Tsuki-mi-dai. [281]

Is it astonishing if, in their imagination, reality and fiction became "confusion worse confounded," huts grew to palaces, the single stones to islands, and, finally, they built up a world of their own? As children gazing at clouds give full play to their fancy, so did they see in the external world what really existed only in their inner consciousness. The explanation of many of those vagaries lies in the strength of their fantasy, the vividness of their illusions; but we might go even further and justly say that one of the strongest qualities of the nation is the strength of their imagination. With them fiction almost becomes reality, fancies acquire positive values, and subjective sensations are allowed to act upon the objective world. Any one who is interested in metaphysical questions will be struck by this trait, not only in their art, but in every incident of their existence. Whether in the past or present, it will strike us as one of the main characteristics of the Japanese, and, turning over the pages of their long history, it is one of the prevailing features. It was a potent factor, which gave strength to their convictions and endurance to their arms. In fact, their whole ancient moral code and their laws of chivalry were based on the same principle. The two qualities which inspire sincere admiration all over the world—their great loyalty to the sovereign and boundless patriotism [282]

—are emanations of the same disposition. In fact their greatest achievements were carried out under the influence of some abstract conception and brought to success by a national or ethical ideal. [283]

II

If the artistic colouring of Tokio has faded away for ever, its present aspect is marked by the evidences of practical life, and if one's first impression is one of general disappointment, the second is one of deep interest. We soon realize that the capital of Japan has ceased to be a mere bazaar, full of glitter, where all the toys and fancies of the East have been stored to make a pleasant resort for the Western traveller. It is a place of hard work, for the accomplishment of serious aims.

Though my expectations in visiting the old monuments were not fulfilled, and, as I said before, from an antiquarian and artistic standpoint the town failed to satisfy me, I became daily more deeply interested in the busy life and commercial enterprise of modern Nippon. Workshops, manufactories, banks, insurance offices, are increasing rapidly in number. The electric and steam companies, railways and shipping, telegraph and telephone companies, have developed in a most astounding manner. If we consider that the railway was [284] only introduced into the country in 1872, for the short distance from Tokio to Yokohama, which was followed by another short line in 1876 from Kobe to Kyoto, and the first long line connecting the two capitals was opened in 1890, it is even more astonishing to see what has been done in the succeeding ten years. To-day railways have been laid all over the country, and all the main cities are connected by direct lines. To give an idea of this rapid development, I may refer to the fact that in 1887 there were 580 miles open for traffic, and in 1899 there were 3421 miles. Besides the Government railways a great many private companies have been formed. About thirty years after the commencement of Japan's new era, the Government lines extended to 833 miles, including 60 miles in Formosa, and the routes still under construction 1250. There were forty-four private companies as well, with a capital of 228 million yen. The rolling stock of the Government railways amounted to about 1500 locomotives, 5000 cars, and 18,000 goods wagons. Among private lines the Nippon Tetsudo is the most important; it is about 1000 miles long. The next in importance are the Kiushiu and Sanyo railways. To-day it is possible to go from the north end of the country to the south, a distance of 1400 miles. The only interruption on the whole track is the Straits of Moji, where there is [285] still a ferry, but this, it is said, will probably be replaced by a steel bridge, such as that over the Forth. The greater part of the rolling stock is manufactured at home, only wheels and axles being imported to any great extent from abroad.

The first telegraph line was installed in 1869 by English engineers. In 1877 all the foreign employés had been replaced by natives, and ten years later Japan joined the International Telegraph Union. In 1891 the Government purchased from the Great Northern Telegraph Company, with great strategical foresight, and took into its own hands, all the cables forming a direct connexion with Korea. The telegraph offices are not far off 2000 in number, and the length of the wires is close on 30,000 kilometres. The number of internal messages amounts to 16 millions, and of international messages to about 300,000. The longest main line is from Tokio to Nagasaki—877 kilometres. There are several thousands of employés, and in many places bicycles are used for delivering the telegrams.

The telephone in Japan is more common than in any other country in the world, except perhaps Norway. Besides the Government and public telephone offices, nearly every large commercial house, and most private homes, have telephones.

The establishment of the electric system of illumination has become most [286] popular in the smallest villages, and forlorn hamlets are lighted by electricity.

Steam navigation companies are numerous. Besides local companies running small steamers in the larger bays and inland seas, there are several companies for international commerce. Among all these companies the most important is the Nippon Yusen Kaisha. It is the pride of modern Japan, and I quite agree that there are very few enterprises in the shipping line which could surpass it in size and excellence of organization. To quote from their annual report, which will be of interest as giving an idea of the success they have achieved: "With a capital of 22 million yen, establishing regular steamship services all over the world, and with a fleet of 70 steamers aggregating 200,000 tons gross, the majority of them new and provided with every resource for contributing to the comfort of passengers and every modern facility for the carrying trade, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha now ranks among the greatest enterprises of the kind in the world. The regular services

maintained by it, independently of its lines between all the principal ports in Japan, are with China, Asiatic Russia, the Straits Settlements, India, the Red and Mediterranean Seas, Europe, Canada, America, and Australia. The Japanese Diet in 1899 resolved to grant subsidies to the company's European [287] and American Lines, and thus all foreign and home lines, with but a few exceptions, have been ordered to run under the mail contract of the Imperial Japanese Government. The Head Office is in Tokio, and Branch Offices and Agencies to the number of over seventy, particulars of which are given elsewhere, are situated at all the ports of call and other important points. The total number of the Company's employés is about 1200, in addition to about 3500 of crews, firemen, etc."

This synopsis grows in interest, and is even more surprising when we consider that the first enterprise in steam navigation was started only in 1868 between Osaka and Tokio, and in 1880 the Company possessed a fleet comprising about fifty boats. Skippers, engineers, and all the chief officers, were Westerners, and nearly all Englishmen. But the Japanese proved to be apt pupils, and every year a greater number of foreigners were replaced by natives. To-day there are only the captains and a few other officers on the international lines who are still foreigners, but even their days are numbered.

During my lengthened stay in the Far East, I travelled a great deal on their lines, crossed the Yellow Sea in several directions, went down once to Shanghai and once to Hong Kong, made an expedition to the Philippines and the neighbouring islands, and, finally, made a journey in one of their largest [288] boats to Australasia; and I can speak of them with high praise in every respect. Of course, a great many of the boats are built in England, with all the latest improvements. They have electric light and ventilators. And if people who are hard to please sometimes find fault with the *chef's* department, I think they are epicures who would make the same objections on all other lines. But every one unites in praising the general cleanliness on board.

One of the suburbs of Tokio is almost entirely devoted to shipbuilding, and on the strand of the large inner bay there are numberless boats in course of construction, though the most important shipbuilding yards are in Nagasaki. Tokio itself is the central point of all the most important commercial enterprises. The national and other banks, railway and shipping companies, all have their headquarters here. Next the modest, old-fashioned wooden houses, huge palaces of brick and steel tower aloft, built on the newest principles of American skyscrapers. I must confess I don't admire them, and I was sadly disappointed to find such commonplace and up-to-date erections in the Mikado's capital, where I expected to be delighted with mysterious pagodas of a romantic age.

Every day I passed several hours in these huge blocks, and steadily became [289] more and more interested in Japan's commercial activity. In fact, since the reorganization of the country on Western principles the questions of education and commerce are the most pressing of all the problems with which they are confronted. Since the establishment of the new era, which opened their once secluded country to the outer world, transformed their patriarchal system of government into a parliamentary constitution, and reformed the whole army and effected a complete change in the juridical system, the national economics and the education of the rising generation are the riddles to be solved in the future. All the commercial life gave me a great opportunity of realizing the exceptional physical capabilities, diligence, and capacity for hard work, displayed by this people. The number of hours of work an average man can do in the fields or in the factories greatly exceeds that of the Western races. And what is even more striking is the great manual skill shown. The dexterity of a Japanese artisan is too well known to need description, but what I cannot omit to mention is the rapidity with which they execute their work; this faculty seems almost instinctive or innate, and one glance at a model is enough to enable the workman to reproduce the object with absolute accuracy. Another great advantage possessed by them is that the necessaries of life are so restricted. The frugal meals consist merely of a [290] little rice or raw fish; for luxury they have half a cup of *sakki* or rice wine, and for recreation and pleasure an afternoon walk in the flowering orchards or cherry-groves. And if they have a superfluous coin, they can go to the theatres, where national epics are performed in the old-fashioned fascinating style, and where a penny gives admittance from morning to night. Their physical endurance and freshness of mind are two qualities which contribute to the great success they have achieved. How long will they be able to preserve them unspoilt? How long will they be able to guard them from corruption? It is evident that with a different manner of life they are bound to undergo a change; with an increase of daily needs, dissatisfaction is certain to grow.

Baron Ivasaki, one of Japan's principal financiers, and the leader of many social enterprises, after his return from a voyage of investigation round the world, wrote a most interesting paper, not only dealing with his personal experiences but pointing out possibilities, both of financial and moral crises that might occur if the country did not unite to promote, not only commercial and financial endeavour, but a high moral tone. All good patriots and friends of Japan agree with the author in this respect. Unquestionably, there is always a great danger when a nation's ideals become merely material. It is [291] even more disastrous if its spiritual life threatens to become extinct. One of the causes of Japan's strength has been her firm belief in her religious, national, and domestic codes. The great rapidity with which she has adopted Western civilization might easily have resulted in her acceptance, not only of our good points, but also of our bad ones. Considering her marvellous gift of adaptation, the question arises whether this does not happen sometimes, to the detriment of better judgment. In her great zeal to advance and to use all Western means, some of her deeper thinkers begin to realize the dangers which might beset her. The rapid transformation of the old social order must develop by gradation to avoid fresh revolutions, and to spread over the whole country. It is not enough for her to accept merely the technical side of Western civilization, she must understand and be fully convinced by its moral and spiritual principles. The nations of Europe may belong to different denominations, but their mind and soul are imbued by the higher laws of Christianity. Baron Ivasaki, in his articles, points out with great foresight that it is not enough for his countrymen's future greatness and happiness to improve materially, if there is not a corresponding moral elevation.

It becomes evident that the most important question of the day is that of [292] education. During my prolonged stay in the capital I visited a great many schools and colleges. Besides the well-equipped Government Primary Schools I saw many Grammar and High Schools, Public and Private Colleges, and Missionary Establishments. Public instruction, as a rule, is very satisfactory. The teaching of foreign languages, and especially of technical knowledge, is quite surprising, and the examinations in these subjects have the best results. Education, as such, is less successfully carried out; the chief defect of our Western system of devoting itself exclusively to the imparting of knowledge, to the detriment of the formation of character and the arming of the child for the battle of life, more from a moral than from a material standpoint, is also the drawback of this country. Among Tokio's scholastic foundations the University is the most important. To give an epitome of its history:—

THE STATE EXAMINATION HALL AT PEKIN
"The students are secluded for several days in the small cells, while the professors watch from the tower"
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"The germ of this institution was the *Bansho Shirabejo*, or 'Place for the Examination of Barbarian Writings,' founded by the Tokugawa Government in 1856. Seven years later, this name was altered to that of *Kaisei-jo*, or, 'Place for Developing and Completing,' which indicated a change for the better in the views held by the Japanese as to the value of European learning. [293] Numerous other modifications have taken place, both in the name and scope of the institution, which since 1881 has been placed on a thoroughly modern footing, and now includes colleges of Law, Medicine, Engineering, Literature, Science and Agriculture, where lectures are delivered by a large staff of professors of various nationalities and in various languages. The students number over 2700. The courses that attract most students are those of Law, Medicine, and Engineering. A large hospital connected with the University

stands in the same grounds. Other institutions under the authority of the President of the University are the Botanical Gardens in the district of Koishikawa, and the Tokio Observatory at Ligura."

It is a large establishment, covering a huge area of park-like ground, dotted with long red brick piles. Different faculties occupy separate buildings, and if not picturesque, they are well adapted to their function. The library is especially fine, very well equipped, and cleverly organized. It interested me to observe that whenever I came the large reading-room was always filled with students, and it afforded a good opportunity of watching the keenness with which they pursue their studies. I made acquaintance with several of the leading professors, some of whom are Western. They all assisted me very kindly in my investigations. The statements of Professor von Koerber, who is [294] the teacher of the history of modern philosophy, were of especial value. To judge the mental capacity of the rising generation, it is essential to see how metaphysical questions appeal to them, and, as I perceived, they were more prone to accept theories which appealed to their great imaginative qualities than to draw abstract conclusions by the medium of purely logical deductions. They prefer Schopenhauer to Kant, Plato to Aristotle, and so it will be easy to comprehend the unquestionable influence which the modern evolutionist school exerts over the mind of young Japan.

Another institution of great importance is the Government Printing Office, the so-called *Insatsu Kyoku*, its scope including much besides printing, the paper currency of the country being manufactured here too. The offices are marvellously equipped, but the skill of the workmen is even more marvellous. The reproduction of different old prints, etchings, and watercolours by mechanical means, is a triumph of art, and the *editions de luxe* of the old Japanese masters are unique in their way. As I said before, manual skill and the faculty of copying are national gifts, and, during my repeated visits to workshops, factories, and builders' yards, it was these characteristics which most impressed me. I returned frequently to the new Commercial Museum, [295] where there is such a good opportunity given to judge what Japan's commercial production will be in the future. There are already several branches in which they run us very close, if they don't surpass us. In the production of cheap articles they are certainly already ahead, and common calico and cotton goods have not only replaced the European supply for the requirements of the country, but they almost monopolize the market of Korea, and export a great deal to China and Eastern Asia. Cheap china is manufactured to a great extent also, and so are cloth, felt, and leather goods of all kinds. In the Museum there are specimens of the different home industries, and if the quality leaves something to be desired, and does not promise to be very durable, the prices are so low that the customer can afford to purchase, as all Orientals like to do, something new constantly. Unquestionably within a very short time Tokio's and Osaka's large firms will be the great competitors of Birmingham and Manchester, and the European trade in the East will be mostly secured by Japan.

In speaking of Tokio's noteworthy establishments, I finish, where I might have begun, with the Arsenal, where the famous *San-ju-nen Shiki*, Japan's victorious weapon, is manufactured. Arms, guns, soldiering and fights are out of my sphere, but I could not help observing the up-to-date character of [296] Tokio's military equipment. Not only do the barracks bear witness to perfect order and cleanliness, but the military schools and training establishments are well organized and demand hard work in every respect. Soldiers and officers impress us equally by their neatness and perfect turn-out and their spirit of discipline; and still more impressive are the extraordinary vivacity and unceasing activity which they display. Their endurance and capacity for work are, I think, unsurpassed by any other army.

SHRINES AT NIKKO
"To conjure up the past or to recall bygone traditions, one ought to linger in Nara's sacred groves and Nikko's hidden shrines"
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Finally, if I were asked to enumerate the interesting sights of Tokio, or to give advice what to see, and especially how to see Tokio, I should to a certain extent deviate from the generally adopted plans of the guide-books. Instead of drawing attention to the past, I would deal more with the present; instead of describing the monuments of bygone ages only, I would point out the modern institutions of the capital; instead of dreaming in the old cemeteries of the Shoguns and Ronins, I would awaken some interest in schools, factories, and barracks. In fact, instead of dwelling on what is dead, I would study what is to be born and what is already alive. And so the first disappointment of missing the expected gay fairyland will turn into interest in serious reality. Thus travellers would derive greater benefit and waste less time, if they were [297] prepared at the outset for Tokio, not as it may once have been and as we still imagine it from description, but as it has developed in the last quarter of a century. To conjure up the past or to recall bygone traditions, one ought to linger in Nara's sacred groves and Nikko's hidden shrines; but on arrival in Tokio and Osaka, one is awakened to the reality of modern times, and dreams are bound to give place to the hard work of life. After the first disappointment caused by the capital's inartistic and rather incoherent aspect of today, one cannot fail to be impressed by the activity of its inhabitants; and the repugnance roused by its prosaic outlook, where new and old mingle indiscriminately, once overcome, one begins to understand and appreciate the indefatigable labour by which all this change has been achieved.

I would advise my friends, if they can do so, to choose a favourable season for visiting Tokio. If possible, they should arrive in the middle of the spring, when the magnificent forests and shady groves are in foliage, when the orchards are in bloom, and the flower-gardens most luxuriant; or in the autumn, when the leaves begin to turn, when the maples glow like fires on the hillsides, and the sea-breeze scatters the yellow leaves of the birch in golden showers. To stay there during the months when the beauty of nature is at its zenith, and [298] by its marvellous harmony of colour and outline, which is, after all, Japan's main beauty, makes one forget what time has destroyed and civilization ruined, and recompenses one for many charms vanished for ever. At this time of the year the different suburbs offer delightful retreats for the traveller's leisure hours. And some of the old monuments, even though they be not works of art of great value, yet, surrounded as they are by rich vegetation, present a perfect *tout ensemble*. To those who have the privilege of entering the Mikado's palace, and perchance obtain an invitation to the celebrated Imperial chrysanthemum festival, the beauty of the grounds at this season will compensate for the modesty of the buildings and the simplicity of the interior; and though the brilliant hues of the courtiers' embroidered kimonos are replaced by black frock-coats, the chrysanthemums are still gorgeous and dazzling.

DELIGHTFUL SCENERY
"When the magnificent forests and shady groves are in foliage"
[To face page 298]

I can't help repeating with emphasis my advice to take interest in life's more serious factors. As soon as possible after arrival, observe and study, whenever there is a chance, the daily routine of one of the most advancing young countries which unfolds before the visitor. Do not restrict your visits merely to sights; besides museums inspect some schools, and instead of hunting up pagodas of little artistic value, see some of the workshops. In particular, look [299] carefully at the work, as such, and form your conclusions from your personal experience. And I would counsel the getting of introductions to managers of large firms, to the directors of railway and shipping companies; in fact, to all the leaders of Tokio's various social movements. Call on the different ministries, and do not omit to make the acquaintance of the chiefs of the numerous political parties, whom you will find marvellously well informed on political matters, and generally very interesting. And witness some of the sittings of Parliament and a few public assemblies and meetings of shareholders. In short, my last word of advice would be, do not go with the idea of idling, but of studying, in Tokio; and in this case you may not think it pretty, but unquestionably you will realize that it is one of the most interesting cities in the whole wide world.

If Japan has proved herself a very clever scholar of the West, the West on its side can learn a great deal today from Japan. In this respect we could not find a better object-lesson than the Imperial capital, Tokio.

XII [300]

THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS OF JAPAN AT THE YEDDO PALACE

It is snowing. The white flakes fall persistently, and are driven round and round in whirlwinds. Looking out of my window the landscape is cold and dreary. The large square roofs of the houses and the trees are covered with a heavy white mantle.

In no direction can a single soul be seen. It is as if the whole town and the inhabitants had gone into their winter sleep; all is silent and dead under Nature's immaculate pall. I can scarcely believe that I am in the Land of the Rising Sun; it is so difficult to realize that this snowed-in city is the capital of Japan, as colour and glitter form the two main features in our primary conception of Nippon's Island.

We expect to see the brilliant shades of the bright pictures and rich embroideries and heavy silks of Japan even more brilliant under the beams of this Eastern sun, as it is represented on the national flag.

STREET IN JAPAN
"I never saw more poles and beams and masts of different height piercing the sky"
[To face page 300]

The European hopes to find Japan above all an Asiatic, even an exotic country. He wants something like the bazaars of Cairo or Ceylon's palm-groves, [301] tropical like the wildernesses of Java, and ever-blooming like Burmah's gardens. Arriving at Tokio, disappointment in this respect is general, for Tokio is neither bright nor artistic. In fact, the capital of Japan is one of the most colourless and prosaic places on the globe.

Its buildings are nearly all of logs of wood—planks nailed to each other—without any external ornamentation; to commend their style or taste is impossible, for most of the houses have not even an attractive appearance. The old pagodas and the historic temples make an exception to the general rule, but their number is limited, and they are hidden by the groves of centuries.

The general impression of the town is monotonous, and what makes it even more so is that the houses are, as a rule, only one storey high, and the unpainted wood they are constructed of assumes in time a weather-beaten hue; in fact, the outline is only broken by an innumerable number of telegraph-poles. I never saw more poles and beams and masts of different height piercing the sky.

I was rather sorry to have such a cold morning for the day of the audience graciously accorded to me by the Emperor. I must confess that I should have preferred a warm, bright day in the late spring, when everything is in blossom, every corner full of flowers, and Japan looks more as it is pictured [302] on its rich screens and artistic fans.

It is still quite early when the large, heavy barouche belonging to our legation comes to fetch me, and the two strong, well-bred, native horses have hard work to get through the snow-covered streets. Our way is uninteresting; the thoroughfares are too wide altogether, and the small houses on both sides are dwarfed and insignificant.

But we also pass some large modern buildings, American brick-and-steel erections. These are public offices and banks, and make a rather unpleasant contrast in the calm scenery. For some time we skirt a large canal partly frozen over; this forms the outer moat of the Imperial castle.

We stop before a large gate. It is opened at once, and a detachment of small but well-set-up Japanese soldiers present arms. Next comes a bridge, a new stone construction, ornamented with huge candelabra, without much architectural beauty, and without any Japanese flavour. But it leads to a magnificent avenue of cryptomerea, each tree a giant, and all of them of venerable age, their trunks covered with dark moss, and their foliage forming an emerald arch—emerald set in crystals, for their branches are heavily laden with frost.

The avenue looks like a corner of the famous Tokaïdo highway, the Japanese [303] main artery for centuries, where the whole country wandered—rich and poor, mighty and humble, from Kioto to Tokio, from the Mikado's to the Shogun's Court, the Daimios with their retinues in gold and silver; where, too, all the

warriors rode in their rich armour, and all the troops marched to war, or home to rest; where all the pilgrims walked to the famous shrines of Nara and Nikko.

This avenue, leading to the palace, affords compensation for all the inartistic streets outside the walls. I am even glad that it is covered with snow, and that its sole inhabitants are a few gardeners shovelling the ice aside. The dark trees and the white snow, and these few men clad in straw capes looking very much like the back of a porcupine, and wearing hats like flat tea-trays, are so original and so typical. At last I have a real Japanese picture before me, and not one of those we get at home highly coloured and made partly for the cheap Western markets, but a picture full of harmony in an artistic setting, like one of those famous Kakomenos in black and white by the most celebrated disciples of the great Kano school.

A sharp turn brings us to an open space, and the palace is in front of us.

I am afraid "palace" is not the right expression, as it looks from the outside like a large Indian bungalow. It is only one storey high, mainly constructed of [304] wood and beams, scarcely ornamental, and covered with a sloping roof of indifferent tiles. There is nothing striking about it, nothing that would attract attention, nothing that is at all imposing; it looks comfortable and nothing more.

The carriage stops before a flight of steps leading to a simple but spacious ante-room. There is a large table on which are the Imperial visiting-books, a few chairs; round the room stand some servants, dressed in ordinary French livery. I am shown through a long corridor, which is Japanese in character. It has no furniture at all; the beams are carved, and if not imposing are perfect in detail. The large drawing-room, where we sit down, is entirely modern.

The furniture is such as you would see anywhere in Europe, and specially in America—rich, but without any special style or individuality, the only exceptions being a fine cabinet of priceless old lacquer ware, and a large golden screen ornamented with an enormous dragon and signed "Kano Montonabu."

THE TOKAÏDO
"The avenue looks like a corner of the famous Tokaïdo highway"
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I was rather sorry that the decorations of the whole room did not adhere to the national taste. I should have liked to banish every gilded bracket and velvet lounge, and restore it to its original simplicity—such simplicity as is to be found in the Katsura Palace at Kioto.

The Emperor is a late riser, and until he is ready Baron S——a keeps me [305] company. He speaks perfect English, having studied in England for many years; and, even more, he married an English lady whose house has become the meeting-place of all Western and local celebrities.

It is a charming villa, looking very much like an English cottage, and overlooking one of the prettiest corners of the Bay of Tokio; full of English books and Japanese art treasures—English comfort and Japanese taste—it is one of those homes that one remembers with pleasure, and looks forward to

seeing again.

The Baron is certainly a most accomplished Master of Ceremonies; he has all the gentleness of old Japanese manners, and all the culture of Japanese civility, and performs his somewhat tedious duties as if they gave him a personal pleasure.

There are several other gentlemen in attendance—the Lord Chamberlain, also a few A.D.C.'s and chamberlains-in-waiting. They are all wearing Court dresses of dark blue, or of red with gold lace.

His Majesty receives me in his private apartment, whither I am escorted through endless passages. The nearer we get, the colder is the temperature. All the reception-rooms are heated with water-pipes to suit Western taste, but in the Imperial rooms there are only old-fashioned braziers. The reception- [306]
room is small, typically Japanese, has no windows, but only sliding screens, and is denuded of all furniture. The Mikado is standing in the centre, and for the occasion is wearing the uniform of a general of his army, consisting of a dark blue tunic, and even darker red trousers; and as a kind attention he wears the diamond-set star of St. Stephen, first King of Hungary. He is surrounded by his staff and several A.D.C.'s, and throughout, the formalities are carried out with perfect Court ceremonial.

His Majesty shakes hands in a military fashion and at once puts me at my ease by asking questions. First, he wants to hear about my country and our venerable monarch.

"When did you leave home?" "How is His Majesty, your benevolent sovereign?" "By what route did you come out?" "Did you find the Siberian line comfortable?" "Prince Katsura came from King Edward's Coronation by the same line, and enjoyed his journey very much. Your journey through this region which is so little known must have interested you." "How long did the last part of your journey through Manchuria take, and what were your experiences like in Korea?" "It must be most interesting coming from Europe to see such entirely different countries and people." "I hope your experiences have been satisfactory." "I wish you to see as much in Japan as you think [307]
would be of interest to you. As you may observe, we are working very hard, and we try to adopt in many respects the main features of Western civilization and ideas. I am glad to hear you are interested in education. I dare say you liked our University library and the new printing establishments; you ought to see some of the provincial towns, too, and the commercial activity carried on in some of them. Don't omit to see Osaka; I am going myself next month, so I hope I may meet you there again."

Commercial and economic questions evidently interested His Majesty, who was taking a very active part in the arrangements for the Exhibition at Osaka, which was about to be opened. And he spoke about many other questions regarding the country and its development.

The Emperor detained me for an unusual length of time, and seemed to be interested in all the different matters that formed the subject of our conversation. It must be rather difficult for a sovereign who is brought up from birth within these palace walls to realize the outer world, and it must be even more so to get an insight into human nature, meeting it only at official receptions.

Before I left a message came from Her Majesty the Empress, expressing a wish to receive me too. Her apartments are in an adjoining wing. Her boudoir [308]
is ornamented in the French style, and her windows overlook a small Japanese garden. Her dress was of Western fashion too, rather elaborate for that early hour of the day, but in good taste. Her two ladies-in-waiting were clad in the same fashion.

At the first glance I understood the Empress's great popularity. Her gentleness and kind heart are visible in her glance in an exceptional way. There is something very small and fragile about her. She looks rather delicate, and her pale features wear an expression of sadness which cannot fail to impress. She seems, besides being kindly disposed and benevolent by nature, to have had sorrows like most other human beings, and this feature, shared in common by owners of palaces and of hovels, makes her very human, and very sympathetic. She has led, in her vast palace and high position, a rather solitary life, and solitude gives time for thought, and to ponder deeply on the problems of our destinies. Nobody could better understand this spirit of abnegation for the sake of a higher ideal than Her Majesty. Indeed woman's devotion of herself to the good of her family has always been as much praised in Japan as man's loyalty to his country. The paramount qualities of the female side of this nation are not yet known by the world at large, and are very often misjudged by those who have passed [309]

through Nippon's island. But all those who have stayed for some length of time, especially the members of the Missions, speak with great respect of their qualities and virtues, and particularly of the marvellous sense of duty and spirit of self-sacrifice of the daughters for their parents, of the wives for their husbands, and of the mothers for their sons.

Our conversation was mainly about abstract questions, family life, education, charitable works, hospitals, orphanages, and homes. She is patroness of the Red Cross Society of Japan, and listened with great interest to my account of the work carried on by the Sisters of Charity, and in the different institutions under the Archbishop's care. Her sympathy can do a great deal, and I hope she will use it in favour of this great work, carried out with such apostolic zeal for the benefit of the sick and forlorn orphans, to save the children's lives, and to nurse the lepers and the incurables, whatever the cost and sacrifice.

She went into all kinds of details, and asked hundreds of questions about these poor little mites, and exhibited that interest which only a woman can when she is talking about children. It seemed to appeal to her heart, and she repeatedly expressed her gladness at having had the opportunity of hearing about the good work carried on by our church. [310]

I left the room full of the hope that her noble kindness might prove to be a support to this little fraction of her needful subjects.

As a special favour, I was shown over all the different apartments. We went through the state rooms and inner apartments, walked through endless corridors, and viewed the numerous art treasures. There is an extraordinary mixture in taste of West and East, but there is no doubt that the supremacy belongs to the latter, for what is Japanese is really fine.

All the long dadoes are carved elaborately and of exquisite workmanship, and the fretted ceilings are charming in design and colouring. They are as a rule of dark beams, framing gilt grounds; the carving and bronze casts are finely executed.

We finished our wanderings in a delightful little garden, which is Japanese indeed in the highest degree. There is a tiny pond, no larger than a good-sized basin, surrounded by a rockery imitating Fuji; and across an almost imaginary stream a few inches wide is thrown a wooden bridge. Everything is minute: even the little rustic summer-house is no larger than that of a doll. It is a Lilliputian world of its own. Even the trees are dwarfs; but the Japanese imagination makes everything large.

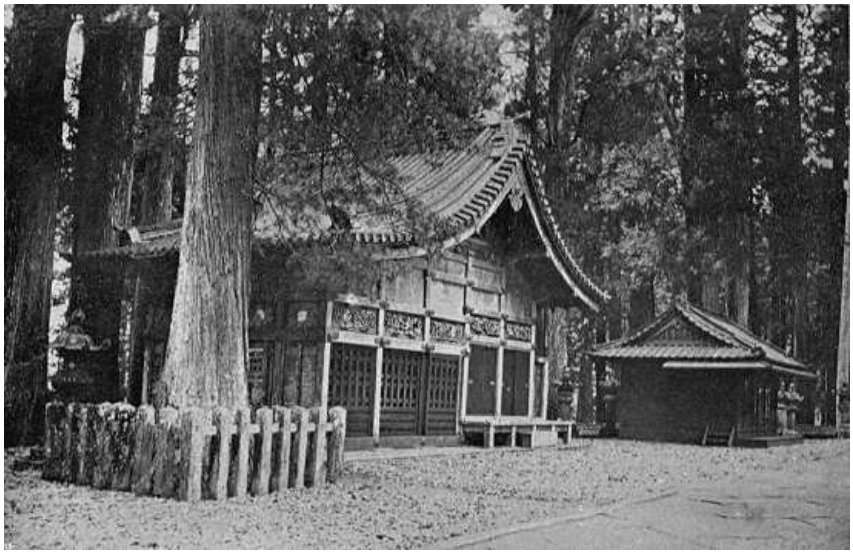
If any one is interested in the Japanese mind and its imaginative qualities, the best fields of study are some of these famous gardens laid out by the great [311] æsthetes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; men of undoubted refinement and culture, some being statesmen retired from the excitement of political life, and many Mikados seeking rest in solitude, after the glitter and pomp of the Court.

Their gardens simply consisted of a few square yards of ground, surrounded by a plain bamboo hedge, a log house built of a few planks, and consisting of two rooms, with gravel scattered before the doorways, and a few tiny bushes growing round. Small and simple, I dare say primitive to European eyes, but to a Japanese mind these shrubs represent a virgin forest, the log house is a palace, the gravel court unlimited sea, and the stepping-stones so many islands.

With their love of artistic refinement and elaborate civilization, they look through the shades of broken prisms, and scent perfumes of different compositions, and build up a whole imaginary world of dainty colours and exquisite odours. But who, coming from the West, would ever understand any of these details of an historical past and ancient customs and strange manifestations of national culture?

And who, returning from one of these gardens, so full of reminiscences of old Japan, to the modern streets, would understand how the new towns are being built up of brick and steel, and how the whole nation is changed by hard work [312] and boundless energy?

And above all, who can at this moment explain or understand all the progress of modern Japan and fully realize all its future importance?



A TYPICAL NIPPON BUILDING
"Small and simple, I dare say primitive to European eyes, but to a Japanese mind the log house represents a palace"
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XIII

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JAPAN AND CHINA ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I
JAPAN

The question of the Yellow Peril has once again come to the front through the recent East-Asiatic war. The unprecedented success of Japan, both by land and sea, has roused universal surprise. When the first news of victories gained by the small insular power reached Western Europe, they were received with genuine joy; but as the Japanese advanced on the mainland of Asia, symptoms of anxiety began to manifest themselves.

What would happen if they conquered all Eastern Asia, and perhaps Siberia also? Above all, what would happen if Japan, united with China, were to overrun the Russian dominions, and one day threaten Central Europe? Already here and there the sad recollection of the old Tartar campaigns was being revived; and indeed, why should not a modern, ambitious commander follow in the wake of his famous predecessor, Genghis Khan? A modern [314] military genius, a Yellow Napoleon, enjoying equal popularity and possessing the same magic power, with millions of money and countless troops at his disposal, might surely become a very serious and formidable antagonist. But would it be to the interest of the yellow race to overrun Europe? This problem is yet awaiting its solution.

I venture to think that under the present conditions the majority of the Eastern people have no intention or desire to enlarge their territory beyond its original borders. If they can only get back what is nominally theirs—what, not more than half a century ago, was possessed by them—they will be satisfied. Japan, which is decidedly overpopulated, and cannot adequately provide for its nearly fifty millions of inhabitants, dispersed over the various islands, may possibly have an eye on some of the neighbouring Asiatic coastlands, but for colonizing purposes is more likely to turn its attention towards the South Sea. And since the ambition of Japan has been awakened, and its adaptabilities to modern culture, its unflagging energy, and its admirable military skill, been developed, there is more possibility that in a remote future Nippon might make Australasia the Utopia of its colonizing efforts.

Certain it is that a brilliant future awaits Japan. The land is rich, and its position, between Eastern Asia and Western America, most advantageous, [315] both from an economic and from a strategic point of view. The people are healthy, strong, industrious, and possess in an extraordinary degree the faculty of assimilation. In this respect, indeed, Japan is unrivalled by any other race.

The primary cause of their present marvellous success must unquestionably be sought in this faculty of assimilation and in the power of discipline—in the

wonderful ease wherewith they appropriate all the acquisitions of the West—the way in which they carry them out. The second cause of their success is their old military system of government, which has produced the present-day soldiers. But in order to grasp thoroughly the situation it is necessary to cast a cursory glance on the past history of Japan. In doing so we should remember in the first place that ancient Nippon was built upon the system of vassalage. The land was divided into principalities of various sizes, at the head of each of which was a *Daimio*, or vassal chieftain, just as the empires of the West were formerly protected and ruled over by baronial chiefs. Feudalism in Europe led to perpetual frontier quarrels and wars, and this was the case also in Japan. The Daimios were always at enmity with one another, and their government was a period of petty warfare. [316]

The military element, therefore, naturally occupied a prominent position, and just as in Europe the knight became the founder of *Chivalry*, so in Japan the *Samurais* established the *Bushido*. And as the German knight of Chivalry created a legal system called *Club-law*, for the protection of his own interests, so the soldiers of Japan had their own military code. The military thus became the privileged class of society. This caste, with its rigorous rules and external organization, had a perfectly developed existence, a special moral standard, and to a certain extent a religion of its own. As the age of Chivalry was created by the knights of old, so "Bushido," the ethics of the Samurais, originated in the Land of the Rising Sun.

To give an exact definition of the word "Bushido" is impossible, because the conception of it is unknown to us. There are no analogous circumstances necessitating its existence with us. The idea of chivalry is the nearest approach to an interpretation of the word, although literally "Bushido" means "Military manner"—the manner and the way in which it is the duty of the armed nobility to fight, to live, and to die. We notice that according to this definition the word includes more than a mere title; it expresses a whole social system, and regulates the views and appreciations of life of all its members. [317]

The description given by Dr. Nitobe enables us to form some idea of Bushido from a Japanese standpoint. "Bushido is the code of moral principles which the knights were required or instructed to observe. It is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down by oral tradition or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior or savant. More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten, but impressed on the fleshy tablets of the heart. It was founded, not on the creation of one brain, however able, or on the life of a single personage, however renowned. It was an organic growth of decades and centuries of military career. It perhaps fills the same position in the history of ethics that the English Constitution does in political history; yet it has nothing to compare with the Magna Carta or the Habeas Corpus Act. It is true that early in the seventeenth century Military Statutes (Buké Hatto) were promulgated, but their thirteen short articles were taken up mostly with marriages, castles, leagues, etc., and didactic regulations were but meagrely touched upon. We cannot, therefore, point out any definite time and place, and say, Here is its fountain-head. It is not till the feudal age that it attains consciousness. Its origin, in respect to time, may be identified with feudalism. [318] But feudalism itself is woven of many threads, and Bushido shares its intricate nature. As in England the political institution of feudalism may be said to date from the Norman Conquest, so we may say that in Japan its rise was simultaneous with the ascendancy of Toritomo late in the twelfth century. As, however, in England we find the social elements of feudalism far back in the period previous to William the Conqueror, so, too, the germs of feudalism in Japan have been long existent before.

"Again, in Japan as in Europe, when feudalism was formally inaugurated, the professional class of warriors naturally came into prominence. These were known as samurai, meaning literally, like the old English cniht (knecht, knight), guards or attendants, resembling in character the soldurii, whom Caesar mentioned as existing in Aquitania. A Sinico-Japanese class, named Bu-Ké or Bu-Shi (fighting knights), was also adopted in common use. They were a privileged class, and must originally have been a rough breed who made fighting their vocation. Coming to profess great honour and great privileges, and correspondingly great responsibilities, they soon felt the need of a common standard of behaviour, especially as they were always on a belligerent footing and belonged to different clans.

"'Fair play in fight!' What fertile germs of morality lie in this primitive sense [319] of savagery and childhood! Is it not the root of military and civic virtues? We smile (as if we had outgrown it!) at the boyish desire of the small Britisher, Tom Brown, 'to leave behind him the name of a fellow who never bullied a little boy or turned his back on a big one.' And yet, who does not know that

this desire is the cornerstone on which moral structures of mighty dimensions can be reared? May I not go even so far as to say that the gentlest and most peace-loving of religions endorses this aspiration? This desire of Tom's is the basis on which the greatness of England is largely built, and it will not take us long to discover that Bushido does not stand on a lower pedestal. If fighting in itself, be it offensive or defensive, is, as Quakers rightly testify, brutal and wrong, we can still say with Lessing, 'We know from what failings our virtue springs.' Sneaks and cowards are epithets of the worst opprobrium to healthy, simple natures. Childhood begins life with those notions, as does also knighthood; but as life grows larger and its relations become many-sided, the early faith seeks sanction from higher authority and more rational sources for its own justification, satisfaction, and development. If military systems had operated alone, without higher moral support, how far short of chivalry would the moral ideal have fallen! In Europe Christianity, interpreted with [320]
concessions convenient to chivalry, infused it nevertheless with a spiritual ideal. 'Religion, war, and glory were the three rules of a perfect Christian knight,' says Lamartine."

Bushido has no written laws; it has been handed down as a tradition from father to son. Its originator was not a sage like Confucius, not an ascetic like Buddha; it was the people itself. It is the immediate expression of past ages, and, as far as man's memory reaches, the interpreter of the sentiments of victorious warriors.

With the increasing power of the Samurais grew also the necessity, as was the case with knighthood, to purify the atmosphere of their fortresses by self-prescribed rules. And it lies in the natural order of things, embracing all national codes, that those points should be most carefully guarded on which the people felt themselves to be weakest.

The first principle, then, was, Justice to all. The Samurais despise above all things trickery and deceit, all unfairness. "Adhere inflexibly to thy principle,"—thus writes a Bushi—"and be ready to die for the sake of duty; but also be ready to strike and to kill if honour demand it of thee." And the more the general situation became degenerated, the more prominent became the letter of this law in the clash of swords.

The second principle was courage. From his earliest childhood the Japanese [321]
boy was brought up to be a soldier, and in his education many points remind us of the old Spartan rigour. Often the mother would admonish a crying child with such words as: "Shame not the honour of thy family; men of this house have never been known to cry." Or again, she might stimulate her son's courage by saying: "What wilt thou say when in battle thou losest arm or leg?" or, "How wilt thou control thy face if the Emperor should bid thee to cut off thine ears or to perform the hara-kiri?" To be brave was the aim of every boy, and frequently was he called upon to prove his courage. He was made to go hungry, to walk great distances, and in many cases this system of hardening verged on cruelty.

On the other hand, the benevolence of the Samurai often degenerated into sentimentality, and the Bushida-nashake—the warm soldier's heart—has become proverbial. To render assistance to the weak and helpless was one of the soldier's paramount duties, and, like the Italian Condottieri and the knights of the Middle Ages who, although they tyrannized over the people, were yet anxious to appear civilized and cultured, and were not blind to their own faults and cruelties, so the Samurais laid special stress upon the observance of social forms, and taught their boys, besides the military arts, such accomplishments as poetry, music, and other fine arts. [322]

Courteousness became a second nature, and to this day, although it sometimes may lack sincerity and has in many cases become an empty form, Japanese politeness always excites the astonishment and admiration of the foreigner on his first arrival in the land. Nippon society manners are the most complicated and tedious imaginable. The smallest affairs of everyday life are circumscribed with the most childish and elaborate rules. The way to enter a friend's house, how to address him, what to talk about, everything is carefully prescribed, even the slight attention of offering the guest a cup of tea amounts to a ceremony, regulated in its minutest details. The Cha-no-yu (tea-drinking), in truth, is more than a ceremony, it is a precious tradition, a rite, illustrating the refinement of taste and the imagination of the people.

MARSHALL OYAMA
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The third fundamental principle of Bushido is honour; more particularly expressed in Guai-bun and Men-moku, which form the basis of the conception of the Samurai. But even the valour of the most heroic Samurai is as nothing compared to his pride and vanity, and to a certain extent these two qualities are still striking characteristics of the nation. Extreme sensitiveness and readiness to take offence are the unavoidable consequences of such highly [323]
developed self-constrictions. The "affaires d'honneur" of the Latin races, and the often mistaken chivalry of the German "Junker" are but weak parallels to the sensitiveness of the Bushi. The hot-blooded Samurai was offended on every possible occasion, and many an innocent life has been sacrificed to this intensely developed military pride.

Whole volumes have been written upon the manner in which these "questions of honour" should be dealt with, and more than one tragic page had its comical features also. Thus, for instance, the story is told of a Busiaki, who killed a peasant for drawing his attention to the fact that there was an insect on his coat. For, argued the Busiaki, vermin feed on beasts, and therefore his remark amounts to an insult. And as the simple peasant was not entitled to give satisfaction for the supposed offence in any other manner, he had to pay for it with his life, in order that the honour of the Busiaki might be cleared. This condition of things might lead also to vengeance and suicide, and the favourite form of the latter was "hara-kiri," which has attained world-wide fame. It is suicide by cutting open the abdomen, and this custom was one of the institutions by which distant Japan has been so often misjudged. To the European the idea is revolting and sinful, but the pride and imagination of that far-away people magnified it into a sublime action. [324]

The most sympathetic characters in the history of Japan have thus ended their days, and many popular heroes of national epics thus gave up their lives. In every Japanese drama there is at least one hero who dies on the stage in this

manner, amid the thundering applause of an appreciative audience. If not a punishment, the motive for committing suicide is almost always an exaggerated conception, not of despair, but of offended dignity or vanity. And like every action of this enigmatical people, hara-kiri and supuku became in time a ceremony, in which every detail of the proceedings was carefully formulated. The victim, dressed in white, and with unmoved countenance, had to perform the operation with a sharp-edged sword. This formality gone through in the supreme manner in which Bushido prescribed it, and the personal vanity being apparently satisfied, the victim seemed not to feel the bodily suffering, and faced his death with calmness. To realize the pagan standpoint of hara-kiri I will quote the following lines of the Japanese author.

"I do not wish to be understood as asserting religious or even moral justification of suicide, but the high estimate placed upon honour was ample excuse with many for taking one's own life. Death involving a question of honour was accepted in Bushido as a key to the solution of many complex [325] problems, so that to an ambitious Samurai a natural departure from life seemed a rather tame affair and a consummation not devoutly to be wished. I dare say that many Westerners will admit the fascination of, if not a positive admiration for, the sublime composure with which Cato, Brutus, Petronius, and a host of other ancient worthies, terminated their own earthly existence. Is it too bold to hint that the death of the first of the philosophers was partly suicidal? When we are told so minutely by his pupils how their master willingly submitted to the mandate of the state—which he knew was morally mistaken—in spite of the possibilities of escape, and how he took up the cup of hemlock in his own hand, even offering libation from its deadly contents, do we not discern in his whole proceeding and demeanour an act of self-immolation? No physical compulsion here, as in ordinary cases of execution. True the verdict of the judges was compulsory; it said, 'Thou shalt die, and that by thine own hand.' If suicide meant no more than dying by one's own hand, Socrates was a clear case of suicide. But nobody would charge him with a crime; Plato, who was averse to it, would not call his master a suicide. Now, my readers will understand that hara-kiri, or seppuku, was not a mere suicidal process. It was an institution, legal and ceremonial. An invention of the Middle Ages, it was a process by which warriors could expiate their [326] crimes, apologize for errors, escape from disgrace, redeem their friends, or prove their sincerity. When enforced as a legal punishment it was practised with due ceremony. It was a refinement of self-destruction, and none could perform it without the utmost coolness of temper and composure of demeanour, and for these reasons it was particularly befitting the profession of bushi."

Kataki-ushi, or vengeance, is another strong feature of national feeling. Contrary to the Christian doctrine of forgiveness, the Japan of olden days endeavoured to exalt the original instinct of human nature, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," into a decree. And how deep this notion has rooted itself into the hearts of the people is best illustrated by the story of the forty-seven Ronins, which everybody in Japan knows by heart, and which is the favourite nursery tale of each Nippon child.

Simple as the story is, it is very characteristic. A nobleman is betrayed by his adversary and put to death. Forty-seven of his followers become bandits and swear to revenge their lord. After many vicissitudes the object of their revenge falls into their hands and they kill him. When brought to justice all the forty-seven commit hara-kiri.

Their graves remain to this day in the grove of Siba, and it is one of the first [327] places visited by country people who come to Tokio. Devout hands keep the modest little tombstones supplied with wreaths of fresh flowers. And thus the forty-seven Ronins have become the most popular heroes of the nation, because their offence and expiation interpret one of the most salient features characteristic of the race, which, judged from a national standard, shines in a different light as we can see from the following passage:—

"We have thus seen the Bushido institution of suicide; we will now see whether its sister institution of revenge has its mitigating features. I hope I can dispose of the question in a few words, since a similar institution—or call it custom, as you will—prevailed among all peoples, and has not yet become entirely obsolete, as attested by the continuance of duelling and lynching. Among a savage tribe which has no marriage, adultery is not a sin, so in a period which has no criminal court murder is not a crime, and only the vigilant vengeance of the victim's people preserves social order. 'What is the most beautiful thing on earth?' said Osiris to Horus. The reply was, 'To avenge a parent's wrongs.' To which a Japanese would have added 'and a nearer's.' In revenge there is something which satisfies one's sense of justice. The avenger reasons: 'My good father did not deserve death—he who killed [328]

him did great evil. My father, if he were alive, would not tolerate a deed like this. Heaven itself hates wrong-doing. It is the will of my father, it is the will of heaven, that the evil-doer should cease from his work. He must perish by my hand, because he shed my father's blood; I who am his flesh and blood must shed the murderer's. The same heaven shall not shelter him and me.' The logic is simple and childish, but it shows an innate sense of exact balance and equal justice. Our sense of revenge is as exact as our mathematical faculty, and until both terms of the equation are satisfied we cannot get over the sense of something undone. Both of these institutions of suicide and revenge lost their *raison d'être* at the promulgation of the criminal code. The sense of justice satisfied, there is no need of Kataki-uchi. As to Hara-kiri, though it, too, has no existence *de jure*, we still hear of it from time to time, and shall continue to hear I am afraid, as long as the past is remembered."

In spite of his valour, his passion for war, his thirst for revenge, the Samurai always preserved in his demeanour the utmost calm. Bushido ordained that a knight was never to show either joy or anger. And while remarking that the foreigner in Japan is struck by the often exaggerated politeness of the people, I should have added that he is certainly no less impressed by the [329] inexpressiveness of their faces. Whether sad or joyful, they always wear the same conventional smile, which is sometimes cold as ice, sometimes nervous, or in cases of strong emotion passes into subdued laughter; but traces of really deep emotion are never visible.

What a Baldasare Castiglione or a Lord Chesterfield attempted to exemplify in the West, was bred in the blood of these people as the highest form of good manners. I have seen weddings and witnessed funeral processions where the family on either occasion wore exactly the same expression. In emotions of any kind that conventional smile alone betrays their feelings.

That same smile is on every countenance at great national festivals. With that smile wives took leave of their husbands, children of their fathers, mothers of their sons, when the troops started for the battle-field. The outward form and expression of it remains the same always. The face, or rather the mask that is worn on the stage of life, as in the theatre of ancient Greece, never changes. No matter if the piece enacted change in its course to be a comedy, tragedy, or a drama. So it was ordained by the code of Bushido, which, very likely because it was an unwritten law, came to be all the more binding.

Bushido thus had its own ethical laws, its own religious tenets. As the knight of the Middle Ages created his own rules of life for use within his own [330] turreted stronghold—a code which scarcely held good beyond the trenches of the castle, but which at the same time he magnified into a divine law, a "Gottesurtheil"—so also the Samurai created his own dogmas.

The basis of his creed is Buddhism mixed with the doctrines of Confucius and Shintoism, the primitive faith of the nation. Originally this was nature worship and the cult of the sun, but subsequently it came to be extended to the person of the Mikado. The Samurai thus elevated his emperor into a deity, or rather an idol, and the emperor, gradually more and more isolated from his people, passed his days within the walls of his palace in a series of ritualistic ceremonies, while the burden of the government was laid upon the Shogun, who acted at the same time as Regent and Generalissimo. Loyalty and devotion to their ruler were exalted into a cult. The person of the Mikado was sacred and inviolable. Land and people were, so to speak, his personal property, to do with as he liked. His smallest wish was a command, the blind fulfilment of which was incumbent upon every citizen of the state. The first petition in the prayers of the Samurai was always for his emperor, and the second for his country. And if with us the first gift a child receives is a little cross, in token of his Christian calling, so the Japanese mother of old would place a miniature sword by the side of her babe, to show that his purpose in [331] life was to defend his emperor, his country, and his honour. At the age of five the soldier's boy would receive as a toy a small real sword, and at fifteen the Samurai was of age, and from that time he wore a sharp-bladed weapon.

The sword represented with them more than a weapon of defence. It was a precious and symbolic possession. The manner in which it should be worn was carefully prescribed, and whenever the warrior sat down to his meal or to rest, his weapon was placed on a tray by his side, and woe to the person who touched it with his foot! Such an offence could be wiped out only in blood.

As a mark of the highest reverence, the Samurai raised his sword to his brow, and this act, too, was made almost into a solemn rite. Cutlers and sword-makers occupied a privileged position among the tradespeople, and in welding the blade, every stroke of the hammer was accompanied by the repetition of appropriate sayings and heroic devices. And when the sword was finished, inlaid with gold and silver, in Damascene fashion, sharp as an arrow,

and flexible as a Toledo stiletto, it was, of its kind, a masterpiece. We may safely assert that neither in painting nor in sculpture, nor in any branch of industrial art, has Japan ever reached such a high standard of perfection as in [332] the manufacture of bronzes and armour.

The most treasured possession of the Samurai, his pride and his glory, was his sword. And now, since these weapons have been replaced by Krupp guns and Maxim bayonets, every Japanese gentleman preserves the sword of his ancestors as a token of former greatness.

For times are changed. During the last forty years the feudal system of Japan has grown into a representative government, and the old conservative manner of thought and conventions have had to give way to progressive ideas. In outward form the European system is generally adopted, although intrinsically many things remain eminently national; for whether the external form be American or English, the underlying principle remains national.

The Japanese are still as determined as of old; their valour is unchanged; their loyalty undimmed. The grandson of the Samurai of antiquity still boasts many of the proclivities of his ancestors, and above all, the moral law of Bushido is still in his blood. The masses still think as their predecessors thought. It is only in dress and armament that they have changed: their feelings have remained as of old, and the same may be said of most of the national institutions, from the organization of the family to the constitution of [333] the state. What has changed is the form and the colour; but the work of internal transformation is left for future generations to accomplish.

In order rightly to apprehend the present situation of Japan, to explain the admirable military discipline of the soldiers, to understand why in their blind devotion to their country they think nothing of sacrificing thousands of lives, it is necessary to make ourselves acquainted with the inner workings of the feudal system, the moral basis of their actions, the principles of Bushido and Samuraism. For it is only by a full knowledge of all these influences, and the conditions of the past, that we can arrive at a true understanding of its present strength.

The life and the death of the forty-seven Ronins may account for the fixed determination wherewith the troops met their death before the walls of Port Arthur. Nippon's sons are in the first instance warriors. They have fought for centuries; they have fought for the honour of their country, they have shed their blood for the glory of the Mikado, and with the same stoic determination they now fight to glorify their land.

To form a better idea of the Japanese army we must indeed bear in mind the peculiar features embodied in the principle of Bushido and the Samurais [334] code. Even the true character of the Japanese youths studying in Western lands and wearing European clothing, can only be adequately understood by those who have been to a certain extent acquainted with their fathers. And the same applies to the whole of modern progressive, fighting Japan; its administration, its state organization, its politics, its military ambition, its social agitations, its industrial developments, and the entire transformation of its labour.

Just as we can only understand the existing condition of the land and of the people, by studying its evolution in the past, so with regard to its future development it is only from psychological features that we can draw definite conclusions. During my stay in Japan I was particularly interested in collecting data from the personal experiences of those Europeans who had resided there for many years. Besides the members of the various European legations it was chiefly the commercial class and the merchants who furnished me with many valuable details. Daily intercourse with the different grades of Japanese society has shown me the life of the people from many varied points of view. Particularly interesting to me were the experiences of the European teachers attached to the numerous civil and military schools. They were all unanimous in praise of their pupils, for their industry and [335] perseverance.

Like most Asiatics, the Japanese are fond of study and of books in general, and even the school-children seem to do their lessons with pleasure. They are quick and sharp, ambitious and untiring in their zeal. The national inclination of the Japanese tends towards technical science. Everything practical appeals to them, and even philosophical problems are looked at from a utilitarian point of view.

The course of Modern Philosophy at the University of Tokio gave me some striking illustrations of the manner in which the Japanese look upon the great thinkers of the West. Upon this point I have dwelt more at large in another work of mine, and I will therefore only mention here, that as in science

material rather than the moral questions appeal to them, so in the case of philosophy it is the manner in which Western thought bears upon the imagination which takes hold of them, more than the way in which the conclusions are deduced by strictly logical processes.

But the inner life, the soul of the nation, is unquestionably best known to the missionaries who have laboured among them for generations. Since the time of St. Francis Xavier, who landed in Japan as early as the sixteenth century and founded the first churches and schools, there has, with longer or shorter intervals, been a supply of priests and teachers from Europe. [336]

In the course of the seventeenth century, long accounts from Japan came to the Holy See, giving graphic descriptions of the condition of the land. In these are detailed the first missionary attempts, which met with such unexpected success, and these reports present a very vivid picture of the days when people accepted Christianity by hundreds and thousands, and nearly the whole of Southern Japan became Christianized. Later followed the long period of religious persecution, of suffering and torture. Yet in spite of so much cruel bloodshed, in spite of the numerous hecatombs of martyrs, there are still some direct descendants of the first Christian families.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century Christianity has received a fresh impetus, and at present Japan is divided into four dioceses, at the head of which is the Archbishop of Tokio. Scattered throughout the land are many missionary establishments and Christian communities. In the larger towns many primary and middle schools are established, and educational institutions for girls exist in large numbers too. The orphanages are most successful, and the leper establishments—where those living dead are cared for by the nuns at the sacrifice of their own lives—cannot fail to excite universal admiration.

Although at present the public spirit of Japan does not show much enthusiasm concerning religious questions, Christianity is at any rate free from persecution. The Japanese of the present day is more or less indifferent to matters of religion. He seeks satisfaction in earthly goods. The old Buddhistic faith has lost much of its influence, and the adherents of the doctrine of Confucius are rapidly decreasing in number. With the introduction of the new constitution, the Government has resuscitated the ancient Shintoism and made it the religion of the state. The sovereign, the Mikado, himself professes this faith. Shintoism, or nature-worship, now chiefly serves as one of the great vehicles of patriotic force. Its ceremonies are most primitive, consisting mainly of short prayers of a sentence or two, and of bowing of the head and the clasping of hands. Their chapels are also of the simplest. They are plain, four-walled wooden structures without ornaments or pictures or decorations of any kind. The only conspicuous object in them is the symbol of their deity, a smoothly polished metal disc, representing the sun. [337]

But this religion, which was universally re-proclaimed from one day to another by imperial command, does not appear to satisfy the masses—at any rate not the devout among them—who prefer to seek peace and consolation in constant prayer and supplication, and therefore continue to visit the Buddhist temples and convents. The cultured and more advanced classes are more and more interested in learning the tenets of the Christian faith; yet, although it is doubtful whether Christianity will ever make much progress in Japan, it is certain that Western civilization, being based on Christianity, is very deficient without its moral support. The leading circles in Japan are conscious of this fact, and realize more and more that a purely material life, and the lack of all spiritual comfort, can never give lasting satisfaction. [338]

Should the day arrive when the people will abandon their ancient beliefs, without having had the opportunity of becoming familiar with a higher creed, a sad deterioration must be the inevitable result. And the nation may be exposed to a similar danger should the old moral basis of their existence be shaken by the too sudden introduction of new conditions, and before the growing generation has had time to reach a standard of spiritual development corresponding to it. Thus far the rapid progress of Japan has been confined chiefly to material efforts; there has not been leisure to give sufficient care to the spiritual and moral needs of the people. The first aim and object of the young Japanese is to become rich, great, and mighty. Blindly they follow the example of the commercial Powers of Western Europe. With marvellous rapidity they have assimilated all that was external, all that was palpable. The Japanese fleet in the harbour of Nagasaki is a marvel of efficiency, while Kobe and Yokohama, as commercial towns, compare favourably with some of the largest trade centres of the United States and Britain. Osaka and Tokio, encouraging factories of every kind, have secured to Japan the market of the East, and life in the principal cities is in almost every respect a faithful copy of European institutions. But whether the people are essentially happier, with [339]

this external veneer, and the strong strain and high pressure it involves, is quite another thing, and a question of great importance to all who have the welfare of the nation seriously at heart. A too rapid transformation of existing conditions might very easily lead to an economic crisis, symptoms of which are already beginning to manifest themselves.

Greater still would be the danger of a moral crisis, and equally unavoidable, so long as the people conform only outwardly to the exigencies of the newly acquired culture, without realizing its moral value, and whilst ignoring its spiritual aims.

II

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CHINA

China is in almost every respect diametrically opposed to Japan. In the first place, the two empires are entirely different in their geographical features and geological formation. In China towering mountain crags and vast, immeasurable plains alternate with one another. Some of those plains are dreary, desolate, barren wastes, while in other parts the ground is closely cultivated, yet wholly inadequate to feed China's millions. The canals which traverse the land in all directions are like so many huge rivers, and the streams sometimes widen into regular lakes, the borders of which cannot be descried by the naked eye.

ON THE YANG-TZE-KIANG
After a water-colour drawing by the author
"And the streams sometimes widen into regular lakes, the borders of which cannot be descried by the naked eye"
[To face page 340]

Everything is large, gigantic, in this yellow empire, and even in those parts where the country offers neither geographical advantages nor natural charms, we are impressed by its vastness, its immensity, as all that is truly great is imposing.

Japan, with its groves of evergreen, its flowering meadows, its smiling, graceful scenery, delights the beholder; but China, with its wide expanses, its enormous tracts of land and its virgin forests, captivates us by its sombre magnitude.

And if the difference between the external conditions of the two yellow empires is great, still greater is the distinction between the peoples which inhabit these neighbouring states. [341]

Physically the Japanese is small, but strong and wiry—he is all muscle. The Chinaman is big, broad-shouldered, and his nervous system is more developed. The Japanese is before all things a man of action. He lives in a perpetual state of motion, he is always doing, and works from morning till night. His marvellous vital power finds expression in a multitude of ways. He acts hastily, often too hastily to give himself time to consider his actions. The Chinaman, on the contrary, is reflective. Before he undertakes anything he thinks out every detail of it, and his intelligence thus greatly reduces his actual labour. The Chinese coolies and labourers are like so many intelligent machines. They work imperturbably, with systematic precision, and always attain their end. Instructive instances of this may be seen among the Chinese labourers abroad, where a Chinaman does the work of two Europeans with half the trouble. The secret of the advantage which they thus gain over their Western rivals lies first in the right distribution of labour, and secondly in that great moral quality which ensures their success, namely temperance. The Chinese working in the fields of California, in the gardens of Australia, or as miners in South America, are good examples of the vitality and energy which these people possess. [342]

It is foolish to say—as I have often heard it said—that the advantage lies simply in the stronger constitution of the race; on the contrary, very often we must admit that the true advantage lies in their intellectual superiority. These national characteristics may be best observed in the lower classes, and particularly in the domestic servant. Every European residing in China acknowledges the superiority of the native servant above any other. He is quiet in his movements, intelligent, industrious; and it is almost incredible how quickly these Chinese peasants learn to anticipate the wishes of their European masters. At the foreign Embassies at Pekin and at the Consulates of the interior, I observed how the pigtailed cook prepares the most delicate dishes according to the latest art in French cooking; the blue-robed house-servant keeps the establishment in perfect order, and the day labourer performs his task with accurate precision.

But it is on a journey that we have the best opportunity for learning to appreciate the salient qualities of the Chinese servant. Far in the interior, in lonely, barren regions, our yellow companion always found ways and means to prepare a warm meal for us, and to improvise a tent or hut wherein we could pass the night. The missionaries in China tell many stories of the marvellous resourcefulness of their Chinese attendants; how they saved the itinerant pastor from dying of hunger and thirst; how, if there was nothing better to be had, they would catch a few sparrows and make a savoury dish of these tiny birds. And, if even tiny birds failed, they would make pasties of locusts or a dinner from leaves and grasses. [343]

Of the Chinaman it may be said with truth that he never gives in. This, indeed, is one of the chief characteristics of his race. He is resourceful even where the European has given up in despair. And we must have the courage to face this truth. The recent hostility against the Chinese coolies in San Francisco, and the laws against yellow labour lately put in force in Australasia, are the expression of it. It is true that among the Chinese labourers abroad there are many spoiled characters, drunkards and card-players; but I venture to think that it was not out of consideration for them that the decrees were issued which prevent the Chinese coolie from enriching the public-houses in America and Australia through his intemperate habits, nor yet to save him from wasting his substance in the foul quarters of the harbour towns. No; all these measures rather indicate the existence of a racial jealousy, for as a rule the Chinaman is more industrious and more temperate than the European. The question of Chinese labour has in our times become one of the economic problems of the Far East, of America and Australia, and recently also of South Africa. However, this is not the place to enter further into this question. Here, as relating to our subject, it is only of importance to note that the coolie who belongs to the lowest class of Chinese society, although he is poor, has fewer wants, and receives smaller wages, [344]

than the labourer of any other country, does not on that account do less work or work of an inferior quality. On the contrary, both intellectually and physically, he is generally not behind his social equals of other nationalities.

IN THE FLOWERY LAND
"The coolie, who belongs to the lowest class of Chinese society, although he is poor, has fewer wants, and receives smaller wages, does not on that account do less work"
[To face page 344]

Very marked also are the virtues of the Chinese tradespeople and merchants; in other words, of the lower middle class. Here again, what strikes one most is the amount of work done and the indefatigable zeal of the people. In the second place we note with surprise the simplicity of their way of living, their evident contentment with the bare necessities of life, even among the fairly well-to-do, and their desire to be and abide in the state of life in which they have been born. The joiner's son becomes a joiner, the builder's son a builder. Only by way of exception does a Chinaman strike out in a new direction. The height of his ambition is, at most, to become a better joiner or a better builder [345] than his father was before him—to improve in quality more than in quantity. Another prominent feature of the Chinese trader is his respect for his caste. As in Japan with the Daimios and Samurais, whose moral basis was a military one, the pledged word was sacred, and the white flag inviolable, so the peaceable trader of China, whose life is governed by the civil code, is always true to his bargain. There is scarcely an instance on record in which a Chinese tradesman has broken his word. In the large commercial towns, overcrowded with merchants and goods from all parts of the world, written contracts with Chinamen are hardly ever thought necessary. Market prices and rates of exchange may vary—and in many cases the local producer incurs heavy losses by a premature selling of the harvest to the European agent—but when a sale is once concluded, a Chinaman never attempts to evade his obligations.

European bankers and wholesale dealers tell us that the difference between China and Japan in this respect is great. In the case of the latter, unfilled engagements and arrears of payment are a standing rule in the ledger accounts of most Continental firms, and considerable loss is sometimes incurred by these houses through the avarice and the subtle devices of some [346] traders. The Japanese to a certain extent, in imitation of the Latin nations, aims at becoming rich, or at least well-to-do, quickly. It is his object to amass sufficient wealth, by a few profitable speculations, to enable him to retire into private life.

The Chinaman, on the contrary—like the Anglo-Saxon—makes trade his vocation in life. "Life is business," he says.

And so in China as in England, or perhaps even more in America, the industrial classes and the merchants have become the ruling power in the country. Socially they constitute a privileged class. As in Anglo-Saxon states the Chambers of Commerce and the Trade Unions, so in China the ancient Guilds arrange all business matters for themselves. The Guilds, indeed, are a most important institution in Chinese society. Their influence is not confined to trade and commerce; it dominates many other relations in life, and the often secret resolutions passed by the Guilds are of great force in matters of local administration and general politics.

Some of the larger Guild or Club houses are well worth our attention. From an architectural point of view they are good specimens of old Chinese style. They generally consist of several buildings, or more correctly, of a row of

halls and pagodas, separated by flower-gardens with small fishponds, and courts with shady groves. Besides the official departments there are conversation-halls and tea-rooms, much frequented by the members after the transaction of business. The most magnificent of these houses are found in the interior, in the cities on the Hoang-ho and the Yang-tze-kiang. The club-house of the tea-merchants at Hankau ranks first in point of artistic perfection. It is a good specimen of the national taste. Slender pagodas, china towers, trim gardens, boldly arched bridges, all harmonious in form and colour, testify to the marvellous creative genius of this people. Never have I seen such finely pointed, tent-shaped roofs, such delicately tapered gables, such carving, and such tracery. Never could I have believed it possible for any architect to build, in fragile clay and line pottery, such bastion-like walls, and towers reaching up into the sky, and surmounted by a roof of porcelain as delicate and rare as a precious teacup. These Guild-houses are truly store-houses of old Chinese art treasures, and in them receptions and dramatic performances often take place. [347]

Among the musical and theatrical entertainments of China, there are some which continue from morning till night. On their merit, however, a European can hardly be expected to pass a fair judgment. The queerness and quaintness of the performance is what strikes one most at first. Yet among the old dramatists there were many of first-rate talent, and life and knowledge of the world were very forcibly expressed by them, but in a form unfamiliar to the European mind. The Chinese, we think, are sometimes too realistic and somewhat formal actors; but yet, even in their modern, degenerate, historical pieces, we find frequent traces of the prehistoric ideals of the Greek drama. [348]

The musical accompaniment of the performance is no less interesting. Contrary to the generally accepted idea that the Chinese have no feeling for music, I venture to think that Chinese music, although it may be discordant and unpleasing to the European ear, is not without great merits. We should not forget that the Chinese musical scale is set quite differently from ours, and is offensive to us chiefly because it is unfamiliar. But notwithstanding its deafening shrillness, it has great rhythmical power; and after all it only sounds harsh to us on account of its complexity. It must not be forgotten that their musical tones are not, as in the West, divided into two, but into four parts. In fact, they have not only half, but third and fourth gradations.

The same with regard to their plastic art—the foreigner is easily apt to consider the external form only. He appreciates or rejects it according as it comes up to our Western standard of beauty or not, but does not stop to look at it from the national cultural point of view. And yet it is impossible to understand Chinese art without doing so. In China art was confined to experts, while in Japan it acquired an ever-increasing popular character. But the Chinese is by far the higher form of art. The Chinese have always been the teachers and pioneers in all matters of thought and creative genius in the Far East. Architecture, sculpture, painting, with all their various ramifications, date back to the remote ages of Chinese antiquity. What we have on record of the time of the first emperors gives us some idea of their refinement and of the art treasures then already in existence, and of still greater value in this respect are the few known monuments of the Shung Dynasty and of the subsequent Mongol period. [349]

Interesting above all are remains of buildings dating back to the Ming Age, which still exist in considerable numbers. Chinese art surprises one principally on account of its force and of the originating power manifested by it. In their colossal structures we chiefly admire the height of the pagodas, the length of the bridges; we are struck by the earnestness of the conception, the magnitude of the design, the masterful execution, the concentration of thought; all these appeal to us even now, in their dilapidated condition. The Imperial Palace at Pekin, although in ruins, is still one of the most magnificent structures in the world. And the same might be said of all other branches of art. We see it in the old bronze statues, in the delicate porcelain work, the exquisite carvings, and the precious cut stones. These relics in themselves may leave us cold, design and colour may not be to our taste, but the artistic idea, and above all the artistic ideal, underlying all these masterpieces, and the power of execution, cannot fail to impress any one at all interested in art. [350]

We must remember that although the Chinese conception of art is so different from ours, the interest of it to us lies not exclusively in the productions themselves, but rather in the mind which produced them. The longer we associate with the Chinese the more we feel attracted to them, the more we recognize their worth, embodied in the versatile spheres of art and culture. In process of time we learn to appreciate, not only the civilization of Chinese

antiquity—which was centuries in advance of ours, and had already reached a high state of development when Europe was still peopled by wild, unknown hordes—but we also begin to appreciate the different embodiments of that strange culture too.

When we study the history of the people in the days of their glory, or read the [351]
biographies of their great emperors, we almost become reconciled even to the inferiority of their existing form of government. Only as we glance through the works of their sages and great writers, who lived many centuries before our era, do we get a somewhat clearer idea of the intellectual capacity of this race, whose culture extended beyond their own boundaries far into neighbouring lands; penetrated to the uttermost borders of the East, and finally—making its way across Korea—laid the foundation of Japanese civilization.

This primeval culture has crumbled away. Only here and there among the ruins do we find glowing fragments and brilliant pieces of it; but even these remnants fill us with genuine wonder, and are eloquent witnesses to the greatness and strength of the nation's genius.

What has remained strong, above all, to this day, amid the complete general disorganization, is the race itself, as such. The prejudice against the Chinese may still be as general as ever, yet one cannot help drawing attention to the fact that neglected, uneducated, and wretched as the population is at present, there are everywhere abundant proofs of unflagging energy and exceptional capacity for work. These two characteristics strike one most forcibly among the lower classes, while among the partisans of the European movement, the [352]
progressive mercantile middle class, or among the scientists, scholars, and statesmen, who still occupy the old classical standpoint, a rare power of perception and intellectual development is worthy of recognition.

The greatest living statesman of China is undoubtedly Chang-chi-Tung. His influence as viceroy of the two important provinces of Hupek and Hunan is supreme. Since the death of Li Hung-Chang he ranks first in the estimation of his countrymen. He may not possess an equally keen insight and the extraordinary knowledge of human nature which the late viceroy had at his command, and he may lack his political shrewdness, but from a moral point of view Chang-chi-Tung occupies an incomparably higher level. He is not only a statesman, but he is also a sage and a philosopher. He is a follower of Confucius and every inch a patriot. He is said to encourage Confucianism among his countrymen, but he is tolerant towards other religious convictions, and within the radius of his colossal viceregal dominions, hospitality is shown to all, including Christians. In politics he is moderate, and although conservative in principle, he favours practical reforms and innovations, as may be gathered from the many industrial establishments in his capital. Personally he owns cotton-mills and factories, built a few years ago by [353]
Belgian engineers, which, under European management, have from the first yielded good results. Gradually the foreign employés have been replaced by natives, and at present the whole administration of this extensive concern is in the hands of natives.

The mercantile spirit of this enterprising viceroy is not in any way inferior to his political genius. Brick-kilns, china-, glass-, and iron-works and gun-factories, besides a whole network of railways, have been established under his administration. His soldiers, instructed by German officers, are probably the best drilled and best organized troops of the empire, and his well-equipped, excellently armed cavalry is the pride of the land. His energies, however, are more particularly centred upon the educational problem. He favours practical instruction, and in order to further this, he proposes to convert some of the unused pagodas into schools. Chang-chi-Tung, himself a writer of no mean order, is perhaps the best read, and certainly the most influential Chinese author living. His work entitled "China's Only Hope," published shortly after the last war with Japan, caused a great sensation. Several million copies were issued, and the Emperor himself wrote a dedication for it. This book is of great interest, not only for the Chinese, but also for us, because it throws a strong side-light upon the character of the [354]
author and upon the party to which at present the most important portion of the Chinese belong.

A few extracts will give some idea of the tendency of the work:—

"Comparing the history of China during the last two years with the history of Europe during the last fifty years, the question involuntarily arises whether the governments of Western states can furnish examples of benevolence, self-sacrifice, and loyalty equal to ours.

"Although China is not as rich as Europe, its people, whether rich or poor, high or low, enjoy greater freedom. European states may be very powerful,

their ruling classes very rich, but the labouring population is disproportionately poor and miserable, and frequently unjustly dealt with. A system of government which ignores such social contrasts, or rather, which creates them, can never be an example for us to follow."

Elsewhere he says:—

"The standpoint of the West is practical; we, on the contrary, are idealistic. Our sages and our scholars have taught us that the happiness of a nation consists in the well-being of its people. Our religions teach us equality and charity; our customs, the organization of our family life, all social institutions, point to this one thing; to make the millions of our people contented." [355]

Again, in another passage, speaking of inventions, he says:—

"I do not contest the technical superiority of the West. I myself am a promoter of progress, but I do not desire that our institutions, which have stood for centuries, should be transformed all in a moment. I note with satisfaction—speaking of progress—that the same elements which at first raged so fiercely against the introduction of railways and steam navigation, have now become the most staunch supporters of these useful inventions."

An equally interesting specimen of a modern Chinaman's opinion of European affairs, is a pamphlet which appeared some years ago, in the English language, under the title of "Letters from a Viceroy's Residence."

The author is a young Celestial who spent many years in the West, and upon his return was appointed secretary to one of the viceroys. The object of these letters was, in the first place, to convince his master of the fact that, in spite of his long residence in the West, he had remained a good patriot. In the second place, he hoped to awaken the interests of the Queen Regent. Several of these letters appeared first in the columns of an English newspaper, published in Japan, and unquestionably praise is due to the author, Ku-hung-ming, at least for his zeal in making himself acquainted with the various [356] languages and literatures of Western lands. The power of his discernment and discrimination may be seen from the manner in which he points out what there is defective, puerile, and unintelligible amongst us. When he condemns shortcomings he generally does so by quoting our own writers against us, and he exposes our mistakes to the merciless scourge of our own criticism. There is not a writer, a statesman, or a philosopher, of any note, to whom he does not in some way or other appeal. He concludes an elaborate study of the civilizations of the West and the East with the words of Carlyle: "Europe is an Anarchy, with a policeman at its head"; and he quotes Ruskin, to apply to China the theory that "culture means a society of cultured beings."

"To the ordinary European trader it seems no doubt a strange thing that we should object to what he describes as the opening out of our national resources. Viewing everything, as he habitually does, from the standpoint of profit and loss, he conceives that if it can be shown that a certain course will lead to the increase of wealth, it follows that that is the course that ought to be adopted. The opening of China to his country and his trade he believes will have this result; and he concludes that it is our interest to welcome rather than to resist his enterprise. From his point of view he is justified; but his [357] point of view is not ours. We are accustomed, before adopting any grave measures of policy, to estimate their effects, not merely on the sum total of our wealth, but (which we conceive to be a very different thing) on our national well-being. You, as always, are thinking of the means of living, we, of the quality of the life lived. And when you ask us, as you do in effect, to transform our whole society, to convert ourselves from a nation of agriculturists to a nation of traders and manufacturers, to sacrifice to an imaginary prosperity our political and economic independence, and to revolutionize, not only our industry, but our manners, morals, and institutions, we may be pardoned if we first take a critical look at the effects which have been produced among yourselves by the conditions you urge us to introduce in China."

This statement is of peculiar interest as showing that with regard to European innovations China occupies a position diametrically opposed to that of Japan. Evidently China is not blind where European conditions are concerned. The Chinese do not ignore the material and technical advantages and achievements of Europe. They realize with tolerable clearness the superior material conditions which modern life offers. The only point upon which they are not clear is how far all these innovations help us to make life more [358] tolerable, and how far they contribute to the inner satisfaction or happiness of the people.

"I have learned that the most brilliant discoveries, the most fruitful applications of inventive genius, do not of themselves suffice for the well-

being of society, and that an intelligence which is concentrated exclusively on the production of labour-saving machines, may easily work more harm for the dislocation of industry than it can accomplish good by the increase of wealth. For the increase of wealth—that is, of the means of comfort—is not to my mind necessarily good in itself; everything depends on the way in which the wealth is distributed and on its effect on the moral character of the nations. And it is from that point of view that I look with some dismay upon the prospect of the introduction of Western methods into China."

The author then describes at some length, and perhaps in somewhat too glowing terms, the cheerfulness, the contentment, the philosophy, the joy of living of the Chinese people. He speaks of the strong bond of affection which unites families, their literary and artistic tastes, their deep-rooted love of nature, all of which stand them in such good stead in time of trouble.

"All this is peculiar to our nature, it is the basis of our inner contentment, a contentment which no one can give, but which may easily be taken from us." [359]

Even for the much-criticized, and unquestionably corrupt institution of the state, the loyal patriot has a few condoning words:—

"The simple and natural character of our civilization, the peaceable nature of our people, above all, the institution of the family, itself a little state—a political, social, and economic unit—these and other facts have rendered us independent of government control to an extent which to Europeans may seem incredible. Neither the acts nor the omissions of the authorities at Pekin have any real or permanent effect on the life of our masses, except so far as they register the movements of popular sentiment and demand. Otherwise, as you foreigners know to your cost, they remain a dead letter. The government may make conventions and treaties, but it cannot put them into effect, except in so far as they are endorsed by public opinion.... Our fundamental institutions are no arbitrary inventions of power, they are the form which the people have given to their lives. No government created and no government would think of modifying them.... Law, in a word, is not with us a rule imposed from above; it is the formula of the national life, and its embodiment in practice precedes its inscription in a code." [360]

Referring to the political disputes between China and Europe, another Chinese writer says:

"When first your traders came to China it was not at our invitation; yet we received them, if not with enthusiasm, at least with tolerance. So long as they were content to observe our regulations we were willing to sanction their traffic, but always on the condition that it should not disturb our social and political order. To this condition, in earlier days, your countrymen consented to conform, and for many years, in spite of occasional disputes, there was no serious trouble between them and us. The trouble arose over a matter in regard to which you yourselves have hardly ventured to defend your conduct. A considerable part of your trade was the commerce in opium. The use of this drug, we observed, was destroying the health and the morals of our people, and we therefore prohibited the trade. Your merchants, however, evaded the law; opium was smuggled in, till at last we were driven to take the matter into our own hands and to seize and destroy the whole stock of the forbidden drug. Your government made our action an excuse for war. You invaded our territory, exacted an indemnity, and took from us the island of Hong Kong. Was this an auspicious beginning? Was it calculated to impress us with a [361] sense of the justice and fair play of the British nation? Years went on; a petty dispute about the privileges of the flag—a dispute in which we still believe that we were in the right—brought us once more into collision with you. You made the unfortunate conflict an excuse for new demands. In conjunction with the French you occupied our capital and imposed upon us terms which you would never have dared to offer to a European nation. We submitted because we must; we were not a military power. But do you suppose our sense of justice was not outraged? Or later, when every power in Europe, on some pretext or other, has seized some part of our territory, do you suppose because we cannot resist that we do not feel?"

These passages, one-sided though they may be, give us some idea of what the Chinese think of Europe, of the politics of the West, and of our civilization as a whole, and we cannot be greatly surprised that the yellow empire looks upon us as its greatest enemy. From the time that our first trading vessels touched the coasts of China, closely followed by men-of-war, the Chinese have been on the losing side, both economically and politically. One great Power after another came upon the scene of action, and seized and occupied provinces, many of them larger than their own European dominions. When a [362] Chinese schoolboy of today studies the map of his country, and considers how much smaller it has become in the course of the last hundred years, how can

it fail to make him sad?

Almost ever since the victorious English navy first made its appearance at Hong Kong, foreign Powers have been occupied in tearing away pieces from the empire. Russia owns the whole northern portion of the land, and with one stroke of the pen Count Muravieff has torn from China and incorporated into the Russian Empire the gigantic Amur district, or, as it is now called, Eastern Siberia, the area of which is almost larger than that of the whole of Central Europe. Korea, once a vassal state, is practically governed by Japan, while Tonking and Annam have become French colonies.

Besides suffering these territorial losses China has been compelled to pay heavy damages after each war. In order to procure these moneys fresh taxes have to be levied, so that it may be said with truth that every son of the land—apart from the ignominy put upon his national pride—has personally to bear some part of the burden laid upon his country. Such was the condition of things at the time of the riots in 1900, and feelings have not greatly altered since then, although on the surface all appears smooth and quiet. The recent war between Russia and Japan has roused the people afresh; and do we [363] wonder at the exultation which fills the masses of the yellow race, now that one of its nations at last appears to be getting the better of its white opponents?

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Will China, in case of need, unite with Japan to destroy the common enemy? Will the Chinese seek retaliation for what they consider to have been an injustice done to them, and which they evidently have not forgotten? It is hardly likely—at any rate, not just yet. Japan and China are now farther apart than one would think possible, considering their close geographical vicinity, and the cultural analogy which till recently existed between them.

Looked at from a distance, and when one does not know all the circumstances, certain kindred features may stand out prominently; but the likeness vanishes when one comes to live amongst them. As a matter of fact, a greater dissimilarity can hardly be imagined than that which separates China from Japan. The difference may be traced throughout their past and present histories. Corporeal build and manner of thought, state organization, government and system of education, all were different. Their similarity begins and ends in the basis from which they both started, namely, the old Chinese civilization founded on Buddhist principles, and early borrowed by [364] Japan from China. The Nippon of the past had no national culture. From China, across Korea, Japan received the doctrines of Buddha, of Confucius, of Mencius, or Thao. From China also came the first scholars, artists, and writers. What to us are the Greek and Latin classics the writings of the old Chinese academicians are to Japan. Upon them the Japanese have based their views of life; from them their artists received their inspiration, and the ideas conceived in China found expression in Japanese literature. As with us Latin, so in Japan Chinese is the language of ancient literature. It is probably owing to this circumstance that so many erroneous views exist in the West concerning the mutual relationship of these two Eastern nations. They are always being mistaken the one for the other, their virtues and failings confused, their good and bad points confounded.

Formerly everything that came from the borders of the Yellow Sea was simply called "chinoiserie," and now in the same way everything that arrives from there is called Japanese. It would seem as if Europe even now could not distinguish between them; above all, as if we were unable to realize the psychological and metaphysical differences of the two nations. We do not judge by what is essential, real, and original, we only go by outward [365] appearances, by what is conspicuous at first sight.

And now, since Japan has made its mark in the contest with Russia, it is only its external success which causes us surprise, the internal change of the people leaves us unmoved. The public of Europe is strangely ignorant of the moral worth of Japan. The interest of the moment is concentrated on the little Japanese soldier, who handles the British gun so dexterously, who blindly rushes into danger, and dies by thousands. And all one knows or cares to know about China is, that it is backward, dull, and stupid.

But as regards the real cause of the present relations, and whether there is a possibility of further developments—this is a matter of small interest to the general public. The nations of Europe seem to be as little concerned to understand the inner qualities of the peoples on the Yellow Sea, their psychological divergences and moral strength, as they trouble to know the history of their early culture and intellectual existence.

This want of interest is noticeable in all our dealings with the yellow races. In

industrial undertakings we constantly confuse China and Japan, and Japanese goods often pass for Chinese. Even those who profess to have studied the history of Japanese art have been found to attribute to Japan the fundamental [366] ideas which originated in China. The more one comes into contact with Chinese and Japanese works, the more clearly one sees that the honour of originality and initiative belongs to China.

The celebrated Japanese painters, sculptors, and bronze-workers were taught by China; they were clever imitators of Chinese art. In point of execution they have doubtless in many cases surpassed their masters. The detail work of Japanese art is decidedly finer and better finished than the Chinese, and in the work of reproduction they have attained a degree of perfection unparalleled in any other industrial nation. But this, after all, is rather a matter of skill than of genius. The artistic conception, the creative power, was far more original in ancient China than in ancient Japan, and although the minutiæ of Chinese art were often crude and imperfect, the fundamental idea was always noble and grand. We notice this particularly in their architecture. China's marble and stone yamens and pagodas were imitated by Japan, but with this difference, that they are built of wood and roofed over with shingles or thatch. In the various branches of sculpture and painting we see the same divergence. The Japanese was always an excellent copyist, but he drew his inspirations from China, in much the same manner in which the masters of [367] the Renaissance school used the antique masterpieces for their models.

Just as the Japanese imitated and appropriated the customs and institutions of the ancient Chinese Empire, so they have now, with astonishing rapidity, adopted European civilization. Their power of assimilation is incredible. When we compare the Japan of today with the land as it was five-and-twenty years ago, our surprise is fully justified. From being under the most antiquated feudal system, the empire has suddenly become one of the most progressive states. At the Mikado's command all things were changed: government, army, education, even national views of life and ideals. The authority of the Shogun is replaced by a parliament. The descendant of the old Samurai becomes a soldier, moulded after the German pattern. The agricultural classes are gradually transformed into factory hands. From day to day the old institutions and beliefs are being destroyed, and with the new constitution a new religion is also called into existence, or rather the obsolete and somewhat obscure Shinto cult is converted into the religion of the state. How much of real conviction there has been in this magic change or how much of it has been the work of natural evolution, it is difficult to say. Inward convictions and the [368] problems of moral satisfaction are outside the pale of politics. Whether the present-day Japanese, who wears a silk hat, is happier than his ancestor with his kimono—whether the workman in the factory is more contented than the former agricultural labourer—whether the internal peace of the land is better secured under the new system than it was under the old régime—who shall say? It will even remain doubtful whether their thirst for glory was not more gratified when guarding the frontiers and the territory of their ancient Daimios than now, when, according to Western notions, their chief object is occupation and material gain.

The most serious of all future eventualities is evidently whether these rashly accomplished innovations, and the total transformation of all existing conditions, may not, as was the case in Europe, lead to a material and moral crisis. In the most progressive circles of the land this is a much-discussed point. The recent labour riots, and the continually occurring strikes in the great cities, cast a certain shadow over the possibilities of the future. Baron Ivasaki, the greatest industrial power in the land, whose ships frequent all parts of the world, who has banking connexions in all commercial centres, who employs a large number of clerks, and has every opportunity of investigating the labour question in all its details, has published some [369] interesting articles on the social questions of Japan. Another prominent Japanese writer, Okuma, occupies himself chiefly with the moral condition of the people, anticipating with fear the time when the innate religious feeling, and the once imperturbable loyalty to the Head of the State, should be shaken to its roots. The ultimate crystallization of the economic and moral relations of future Japan is, after all, the most interesting problem which this nation at present offers.

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The reason that China still delays its reorganization, and cannot blindly follow in the footsteps of Japan, lies chiefly in the internal constitution of the land. The population, which is above all things peaceful and cautious, waits to see what effect the transformation has upon Japan, whether it is really for the good of the people. The above-quoted passages from the works of Chinese writers clearly show that the Chinese as a people do not covet either military

glory or exorbitant material wealth. For them the basis of happiness is peace and stability. The disturbance of harmony is irksome to the nation. This was the initial thought which prompted them in olden times to build a great wall to protect their native land from foreign intrusion. The Chinese are now [370] beginning to realize that the highest wall cannot stem the current of time; that progress—or let us say the course of events—sweeps away even the mightiest obstacle before it. The necessity of their ultimate reorganization is more and more apparent to those natives who have come into contact with the outer world; only, as Chang-chi-tung said, "It cannot be expected or desired that we should be transformed in the twinkling of an eye."

The more impetuous advocates of reform, the representatives of the so-called "Progressive Party," have their headquarters at Shanghai. The members of this faction are mostly educated, travelled persons, speaking several European languages, students who have finished their university career, officials, merchants, and authors. Some amongst them, on account of their revolutionary tendencies, have been banished from Pekin or from the interior, and reside in the European quarters and districts governed by consular magistrates. These are the leaders of the discontented. They reject all existing conditions and demand the total abolition of the present system of government. But the man of the day I should say is Yuan-chi-kai. It is he who represents the Progressive Party at the Court of Pekin. To his influence may be attributed the various reforms introduced during the last few years, and the notable changes in the politics of the Tsung-li Yamen. Of all the viceroys [371] of the united empire he is the one most directly in touch with the representatives of foreign Powers.

Yuan-chi-kai is in the first instance a military leader. His policy, which is to secure peace for his land, is based on military principles. It is probably at his instigation that a number of young Chinamen were sent at state expense to Japanese universities, in order that they might there study the effect of the imported reforms upon an Asiatic nation already imbued with European ideas. To a Chinaman all these institutions would appear in Japan in a more intelligible form than in Europe, where all conditions are so absolutely contrary to their preconceived notions. Perhaps, in his capacity of soldier, Yuan-chi-kai also hoped that the Japanese might impart some of their military enthusiasm to the lethargic youths of his country. So far the results have been satisfactory. A residence in Europe has seldom proved of much benefit to Chinese students, but a visit to the universities and schools of Tokio, Yokohama, or Kobe, has seldom failed to answer its purpose.

The already modernized Chinaman is doubtless an interesting figure, and he displays highly intellectual qualities. Life in the harbour towns, where he has free intercourse with foreigners from all parts of the world, has considerably [372] widened his field of vision, and offers him ample opportunity for making comparison between the natives of the various European countries. It enables him also to become more familiar with the achievements of Western culture. The latest products of French industry, Manchester goods, or any of the most recent European inventions, reach these shores within a very short time. There are many wholesale merchants and bankers who have for several years been in direct communication with the city of London, or Wall Street in New York. They are bold and enterprising men, and work their business exclusively on modern principles. Their offices are fitted up in European fashion with telephones and type-writers; only here and there a rare plant, some precious object of art, or a singing bird in a cage, betrays the native instinct of love of nature and art. The national dress is still worn, and the wide silk trousers and traditional pigtail strike one at first as somewhat out of place in these modern surroundings.

At Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tien-tsin, one has excellent opportunities of seeing the business man at home. During my stay in those towns I thoroughly enjoyed the social intercourse with these people. It is interesting to ponder over what may become of them as they continue to acquire all the advantages [373] of Western accomplishments. What possibilities this nation possesses!

The millionaires generally build their houses in European style. The furniture of their reception-rooms is also of foreign make, and only the beautiful porcelains and other art treasures remind us that we are in China. Honestly speaking, all this modernization in house-building and furnishing is to be regretted, for surely the Chinese yamen is more tasteful than the European house of iron and brick!

Dress has thus far not been touched by the fashion, and anything more beautiful than the richly embroidered silk and velvet mantles of the wealthy classes can hardly be imagined. Neither has Americanism been able to obliterate the old-world manners and rules of courtesy, or to sever the bond of family affection and the inborn respect to parents. A Chinaman protects his

home above all that is dear to him. In my intercourse with the Chinese I have noticed that even the most advanced among them, who have lived for years in England or in France, and who have enjoyed all the advantages of our commercial and industrial achievements, scrupulously avoid imitating the private life of the West. All that relates to business is zealously excluded from the home, and it frequently happens that the wife or the child has never [374] entered the office of husband or father, nor does the father ever mention business matters in the home circle. The office is for work, he says, the home for rest.

It has often been remarked to me that with us the wear and whirl of business and of excessive ambition, destroy the joy of living. One of my acquaintances at Hong Kong once said, "The conditions of life in the West nowadays make man his own enemy. He sacrifices his whole life to acquire what is in the main worthless, without giving himself time to enjoy what he already possesses."

A banker expressed himself in a similar manner. "Most people in Europe," he said, "love money for its own sake, but not for what money can do to ennoble their lives."

The more intimately I have become acquainted with Chinese mood and thought, the better have I learned to understand the psychical condition of the people. It has been said that the Chinaman, when first he comes to Europe, is struck by the sad expression on all the faces. They say that the Anglo-Saxon, or perhaps more still the Latin nations, appear to be more upset by some paltry superficial annoyance, a social slight or deception, than the Chinaman is at the sight of death. They say that we prize exorbitantly what is of small real value, while the things which make life worth living and give [375] inward satisfaction are neglected by us. And I must confess that I have not been able to confute this statement. Life in the West—that is to say, the stability of the moral equilibrium of existence—is very precarious. Steam-engines have long since killed all sentimentality in us, and deeper feelings are only too frequently sacrificed to outward appearances and conventionalities. Where even the basis of religious conviction fails, there is nothing left to compensate for the vicissitudes of life.

The Chinese Christian, as the progressive element of the land, desires above all things that his children should lead pure, Christian lives, a point which is frequently neglected with us. I have known many Chinese Christian families. I have been in the houses of simple labourers and in the huts of peasants, as well as in the mansions of the wealthy, and I have found, as a rule, with poor and rich alike, that charity and brotherly affection are not empty terms, but that they find expression in their daily life. Their care for the poor and needy is quite touching. Such at least has been my experience, and I have heard the same from missionaries who have spent their lives amongst them. The charge of insincerity, which is so often brought against the Chinese converts, is greatly exaggerated, at any rate as far as the Catholics are concerned. [376]

We must not forget that the greater portion of the Chinese Catholics have been Christians for many generations, and receive regular religious instruction. The arrival of the first missionaries dates back to the thirteenth century. It was Kublai Khan who invited them first to settle in the country, and in course of time he entrusted the education of his son to them.

More than six hundred years have passed since the foundation of the bishopric at Pekin; Monte Corvino was appointed first bishop by Pope Clement V, and Marco Polo, the famous Italian traveller, accompanied him. Six thousand baptisms took place in the course of the three following years, and the number of Christians soon grew to a hundred thousand. Frequently recurring persecutions hindered the spread of the gospel; however, it is not my object here to trace the history of Christianity in China, a question I deal with in another volume, but rather to point out that the descendants of those early converts have embraced the Catholic faith already as the religion of their fathers. With regard to the so-called forced, or paid conversions, I must mention in the first place that adult conversions very seldom occur, and have seldom brought the person concerned any material advantage, but on the [377] contrary exposed him to injustice and persecution. A Chinaman rarely renounces or changes a once settled conviction, and the greater number of baptisms recorded were administered to the children of Christian parents or to orphans and deserted boys, and especially girls, who, without the intervention of the Church, would have died of starvation or neglect. Such children are put in orphanages under the supervision of nuns, and taught a trade which afterwards enables them to provide for themselves. The more talented among them are educated in the Middle Schools belonging to the Mission, and in the colleges established in the larger towns. The administration of these institutions is in the hands of the clergy, and their popularity is best proved by the fact that a considerable number of their

students profess other religions.

The children of the well-to-do merchant class, before they can receive any appointment or start on a foreign tour of study, generally finish their education at one of these establishments, which, especially in the harbour towns, are of a very high standard. Their usefulness and superiority are also universally acknowledged. All classes of society, regardless of creed, contribute to the maintenance of these schools. The "Christian Brothers" at Pekin have quite lately erected a large college on entirely modern principles, [378] which supplies a long-felt want in the capital.

In spite of all these reforms, it will be long before China acknowledges the superiority of the West. Although public opinion is slowly and gradually changing, this is not entirely because the people recognize the superiority of Western culture, but rather because they are in self-defence obliged to make reforms in order to ward off the dangers which threaten on all sides.

To a Chinaman the ideal of happiness was quietness and peace; the object of his civilization to conquer and subdue the brutishness of human nature, and to combat all desire for violence. As a result of this education and such a turn of mind which have been in force for more than ten thousand years, militarism has not only been banished from their social code of law, but died out of the upper social classes. From generation to generation the Chinese are taught that the greatest of all virtues is equanimity; can we therefore wonder that they do not yet appreciate European civilization, which appears to teach the reverse? If the Chinese have been at last compelled to relinquish their ancient views of life and to accept ours, can we blame them if they do it grudgingly?

After all, it is only a question of time: how long the Chinese can hold out, and stick to their old civilization. It may be decades, it may be hundreds of years. [379] Time is a factor of only secondary importance where it concerns the transformation of a whole race. But the day is coming, must come, when not only China's four hundred millions, but the milliard of the whole Tartar races shall, without exception, adopt the European civilization, and all the advantages of it. And if in that remote future the question of the Yellow Peril should arise, the consequences may indeed be serious. For China would naturally remain hostile to the West, and, in conjunction with Japan, be its most formidable foe, so long as the two cultures of the West and the East do not learn to understand each other. Little as we really know of the peoples of the East, still less do they know of us. To remove the mutual misunderstanding should be our earnest endeavour. And this, though not an easy task, considering the prominence which has been given to the existing differences, is not an impossible one; for does not the burden of it fall alike on both the white and the yellow race?

When we shall have succeeded in dispersing the prejudices existing on either side; when we shall have learnt to appreciate the virtues of the yellow race, and they shall have recognized the nobler ideals which animate us; then the two races, instead of opposing one another in the battle-field, will, let us [380] hope, offer one another the hand of good fellowship, and the banner on the one side of the united brotherhood will bear as a device, "Mutual Aid and Help" instead of "Aggression and Oppression"; and on the other side, "Friendship and Confidence" instead of "Violence and Mistrust."

Let us hope that the Chinese will benefit, not only by our military equipments and material achievements, but that they will also share our spiritual supremacy, and above all learn or recognize the fundamental principles—the basis of all true civilization, the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.
XIV

CONCLUSION [381]

The foregoing chapters were written on the eve of the war. Since that time the situation is, to some degree, altered, though not so essentially as might be imagined; and I even believe the general feeling to be, to a certain extent, the same today as it was yesterday. Neither party is entirely satisfied; the interests and aims of neither the one nor the other seem to have been fully realized, and both appear to have lost more than they have gained in the lengthy, costly, and cruel war. On the one side, the Russians have had to renounce the most valuable provinces of what they regarded as their former acquisitions, whilst the Japanese have not been compensated, either by the definite annexation of Korea or of Manchuria. The political situation is fundamentally identical with that of yesterday, or rather with that of a decade

ago. The Peace of Portsmouth does not alter the *status quo* much from what it was after the Treaty of Simonosaki, still less from what it was before the Alliance of Chifu.

The problem of the domination of Eastern Asia is not solved; the two great races, the white and the yellow, with their conflicting interests, are striving for the mastery as before. [382]

The Peace of Portsmouth might more justly be called an armistice. A truce has been concluded, and we hope that this truce may be of longer duration than the last. And, above all, let us hope that it may really tend to the well-being of the countries interested, and of cultural and moral advantage for the nations concerned.

Though the Peace of Portsmouth may be unimportant, the moral influence of its articles is all the more real from a purely material point of view. Japan, in spite of her admirable self-restraint, has become one of the Great Powers, and she shows her strength, her security, and her power, more especially by her moderation and self-control. The renunciation of certain points and the ratification of many conditions required, undoubtedly, a self-control and a political foresight which this young nation has lately proved she possesses. After an unexpected succession of brilliant victories—when the fleet of her rival had been annihilated, the forts of Port Arthur laid in ruins, the hostile armies forced back step by step—it was hardly credible that Nippon would refrain from insisting upon complete evacuation of Manchuria, annexation of Saghalien, and at least a certain amount of war indemnity.

Was it not natural that Count Witte should inform his depressed countrymen with satisfaction, that Russia is still as much a Great Power in the Far East as she was before? Was it not pardonable if this piece of news, and many others of a similar kind with regard to Russia's diplomatic acquisitions, gave rise to tumult in the streets of Tokio, and, at any rate among the lower classes of Japan, to loud expressions of dissatisfaction? Such spontaneous manifestations of a people's feelings are easily understood and cannot be taken amiss; but these people, in spite of their dissension, will daily recognize more and more what uncommon astuteness has been displayed by the envoys of the nation, in their acceptance of the present and, to some extent, unsatisfactory terms of peace. [383]

Time will prove what were the motives which chiefly determined the Japanese Government to desist from further prosecution of the war. Certainly the rôle played by the leading Powers must have been an important one. It seemed increasingly doubtful if the forms of future loans would ensure the same interest for the groups concerned. Anglo-American credit, which Japan apparently possessed to an unlimited extent at the outbreak of the war, became circumspect and cautious to a degree. Further financial undertakings, which, in consequence of the unexpected and decisive defeat of Russia, might have resulted in insolvency, could of course not be agreeable to the French and Continental stockholders. [384]

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From an international point of view it was desired that the situation, at any rate as far as appearances went, should remain unchanged. What was aimed at was equilibrium, not preponderance. Opinions which made themselves heard, not only in Central Europe, but also in the English and American newspapers, showed more and more plainly how critical the situation would be if Japan alone possessed undisputed paramount power in Eastern Asia. The leading papers, which at first had been so enthusiastic and described with such unbounded admiration Japan's gallant battles and unexpected victories, grew gradually reserved as the question of how far Japan's ambitions might one day extend, became doubtful.

Economic acquisitions were feared even more than the actual strategic conquests. Already a portion of the commerce of the Far East has left European hands and fallen to the share of Japan, and evidently this will more and more be the case. The vicinity of the country, the cheap rate of wages, the simplicity of social conditions and those of labour, even at the present day, all contribute to give Japan the advantage in the competition. What their Government chiefly covet, at any rate just now, are new commercial spheres [385]
—safe markets—to profit by the great wealth of neighbouring states. By adroit commercial treaties with China, exploitation of the mineral riches of Manchuria and the Korean mines, Japan may, in a very short time, not only make good her war expenditure, but consolidate the economical condition of the empire and increase the general well-being.

From a political point of view, it can no longer be denied that the Pacific Ocean will be, at least on the eastern half, dominated by the Japanese fleet. In short, it is this point which is the essential one.

As I have already stated, Japan's schemes of conquest, if she had any, would be directed less towards the north than towards the south. Siberia never seems to have had a great attraction for her, and I believe that even Manchuria, together with the Amur Provinces, leaves her indifferent. She intends to let the original possessor, China, reconquer it one day. Her far-

seeing policy seems to be governed by the assumption that the Eastern Asiatic continent belongs to her neighbours, the Chinese. For herself, she wants to secure the position of a great Sea Power. Her island home, and more especially her sea-faring population, tend to guide her in this direction. As factors to this end they have not only subjective competency, but the greatest [386] objective possibilities. The Island Empire of the Pacific is still, to a great extent, with all her wealth, a *terra incognita*. We may say the same of the South Sea Islands, which are mostly only under the nominal dominion of the white races. Honolulu and the Philippines might one day be included in the dominions of this newly-arisen great Power; and her sphere of action will possibly create a yet larger circle.

Australasia, even, might become the ultimate aim of Japanese Imperialism and commercialism. The climatic conditions of the northern parts are such that Europeans find it difficult to settle there, and in the limitless sugar and coffee plantations the employment of white labour has always been unsuccessful, in spite of every effort. The number of the white inhabitants is still very small, although the continent was first occupied over a hundred years ago. The original native tribes have slowly died out; but the new settlers, over this whole extent of enormous territory, do not number as many as the population of London. Sparsely peopled, she stands there isolated and unfortified, defenceless, so to speak, in the midst of the sea.

The actual guarantee for her independence is offered by the circumstance that she forms part of the British Empire. This dominion is of course nominal; [387] still, it is enough, at any rate at present, to protect the continent from foreign attack. But it is not hard to foresee what would happen to Australia, with the adjacent islands, Tasmania and New Zealand, should she be severed from Great Britain. Indeed, it is much to be feared that if ever the present alliance between England and Japan were to change into hostility, the former pupils and friends might be obliged to turn their arms against their instructors and allies.

Now, however, a truce has been declared in Eastern Asia. The Peace of Portsmouth has been concluded, and the consequences of this recent event will undoubtedly be greater than the bloodiest battles of the past few months, although it occasioned less noise. I must acknowledge that I am somewhat astonished that the world which welcomed with such jubilation Japan's victories at sea, seems to fail to understand her greatness in the field of diplomacy. Yet nothing was harder than to find such a solution of the various antagonistic problems as should ensure a free path for progress in the future. After such glorious battles, after the unchecked progress of an army intoxicated with success, it must have been very hard to halt, and to utilize this interlude for future strengthening and eventual expansion. Nothing could really have hindered the march to Harbin or to the Baikal district. Even the [388] occupation of Vladivostok was merely a question of time. But, as has already been stated, it was not to Japan's interest to press northwards, and still less to carry the day by sowing the seeds of a yet greater hatred, and exciting the conquered country to a policy of revenge.

That, probably, was the reason why the Japanese gave up the war indemnity, and hope to refund it themselves from the agricultural wealth of the strip of land annexed, instead of from the Russian coffers. Japan did not desire either to increase the animosity of her enemy or to lose the sympathy of her allies. Above all, she abstained from rousing hostility and jealousy on too many sides before the definite attainment of her goal.

The self-command evinced by the Japanese is the greatest feature that, in the whole course of her history, we have had occasion to admire, it is even greater than her bravery, and this same attribute was manifested in a remarkable manner during the entire war. In the battles, whether in their dealings with prisoners and wounded, in slight advantages, or in important victories, they strove to manifest their moderation, self-control, and humanity.

Komura's task was no easier than Oyama's or Togo's. To accept and carry into execution the peace, in its present form, must have been all the more [389] distasteful in that the whole country was against it and expressed its opinion in an exceedingly hostile manner.

Yet, had the populace been more deliberate in its judgment, they must have appreciated the diplomacy of their statesmen no less than the strategy of their generals. They may, moreover, rest assured that the present peace, though it may appear somewhat unjust to them, will prove to be of as great benefit and of as sure advantage as if better terms had been arranged. Was it not so, in the case of past victorious wars, especially as regards the terms of peace concluded with little glory and renown at Simonosaki and Chifu, which yet contributed so much to heighten the army's thirst for combat, and to

develop the patriotism of the nation? Undoubtedly Japan is reckoning upon future eventualities and struggles in which she will demand yet more courage from her army and even greater enthusiasm from her sons.

* * * * *

But for the moment, at least, we may look with confidence to the Peace, and hope that Nippon, which has won the admiration of the whole world in the late war, will show herself not less capable in time of peace. May she assist the countries that have come within her sphere—especially Korea—to a higher development! May she improve the conditions of agriculture, industry, as well as of culture, and truly strengthen all those moral, ethical, and spiritual aspirations which alone make for the positive weal of mankind! In one word—may the Land of the Rising Sun earnestly strive to cast rays of light on Eastern Asia! [390]

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