

## MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

## CHINA'S NEW RAILWAY.

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TONG SHAN, North China, June 16, '94.



HE imperial railroad has just been completed to the borders of Manchuria and regular trains were put on last week between Tien-Tsin and Shan Hi Kwan. This last city is on the boundary between Manchuria and

China at the point where the Chinese wall juts down into the sea, and you can now go to the great wall by train. An army of laborers is at work pushing the road further toward the north, and when it is completed it will be about 500 miles long and will almost reach the Russian Siberian frontier. It will probably at some time connect with the great Trans-Siberian railroad, which is now being built from Vladivostock to St. Petersburg, and the trip from here to Berlin and Paris will be made by land. For six years the trains have been running regularly between here and Tien-Tsin, a distance of ninety-nine miles, and this new strip of road, which has now been opened to traffic, is of nearly the same length. There are, in fact, today about 200 miles of road here in active operation and there are seventeen trains (regular trains) a day running upon this railroad. It is the only railroad in China, and it is of the greatest interest in that it is the beginning of a system of lines which will eventually cover this country as with a net and which may in its changes revolutionize the trade, not only of this empire, but of the whole world. The Chinese are now interested in the subject of railroads as they are never been before. They intend to develop their vast resources themselves, and I see their works in this direction everywhere I go. At Shanghai I visited the Kiagnan arsenal, where thousands of these people make the finest of modern guns and where I saw their successful experiments in the making of steel rails with Chinese iron and Chinese coal. They are now putting up furnaces and rolling mills there for the making of steel, and their workmanship shows that they are as expert in such manufacture as any people in the world. At Hankow, 750 miles in the interior of China, I found seventy-five acres of ground covered with the preparations for steel furnaces and car works, and I wrote a letter on the top of a steel blast furnace 100 feet high and something like 50 feet in diameter. At Tien-Tsin, which, you know, is Li Hung Chang's capital, there are hundreds of acres of shops of various kinds,

and here at Tong Shang, in the very heart of the northern part of the great plain, there are thousands of men employed in making cars, in mining coal and in the manufacture of coke. Tong Shan, with its many smoke stacks, its piles of coal and its modern works, looks, in fact, more like a suburb of Pittsburg than a city of North China, and the black-faced miners, with their long queues tied tightly about their heads, seem out of place in the picture. It is the center of the Kaiping coal mines, of which I will write further on, and also the junction at which the railroad of the Chinese Railway and Mining Company and the new Imperial railroad come together.

The road from Tien-Tsin to this point was built by a private stock company, of which Li Hung Chang is practically the head, as he is of everything progressive in China. The line which has just been opened is being built by the government and it is intended to aid the country in preventing the aggressions of Russia. By it troops and supplies can be carried almost to the Russian frontier, going for something like five hundred miles through the rich country of Manchuria and connecting most of the big cities of the Mongols with Tien-Tsin. An appropriation of two millions of dollars a year has been set aside for the building of this road, and though I am told that this appropriation has been cut down this year on account of the money needed for the fireworks on the Empress Dowager's birthday there is no doubt but that the road will be pushed onward and that it will be a great trunk line through the north-eastern part of the empire. At the present writing the work of surveying the road and building the embankments is going on at a point about fifty miles beyond the great wall, and the road to the wall is as well built as the great trunk lines of the United States. Heretofore all the freight to the north has been carried on camels and the mule-litter has been the Chinese Pullman car.

I traveled over the new line on one of the first trains, and I have had the best facilities to make a careful examination of it. I am with Gen. John W. Foster, our ex-Secretary of State, and Li Hung Chang has put at his disposal his viceregal car. Our trip to the great wall has been made on a special train, and we are entertained here by the Chinese directors and by the foreign officials who have superintended the building of the road. Such an excursion has never been possible in China before. When Gen. Grant visited Li Hung Chang there was not a line of track in operation and there were no signs of any for the future. When Secretary Seward traveled through the empire the country was even more backward, and the reception which has been given Mr. Foster has included many things which were impossible to China's famous guests of the past. His trip to Peking, for instance, was made in the viceroy's steam launch. He reviewed the troops of Li Hung Chang's Military School at Tien-Tsin, and saw them go through the modern maneuvers of a sham battle, and his visit has been enlivened with

serenades of our American national airs by Chinese brass bands. The viceroy's private car has heretofore been reserved exclusively for his own use, and the officials in charge are directed to allow no Mandarin or other person to take it. All sorts of excuses have been made to keep it out of the hands of the Chinese officials, and one of the English officers of the works said to me today: "You can't imagine what a series of disasters has happened this car. I venture it has had its axels broken 500 times and its machinery has been out of order a thousand times."

We first came over the road belonging to the Chinese Railway and Mining Company. This has been in operation for six years, and it is, I understand, paying good dividends. Its capital stock has been watered again and again, and there are undoubtedly many Chinese squeezes connected with it. Nevertheless it pays a dividend to its stockholders, and though there was much corruption in its building, it is said the road has been constructed as cheaply as any railroad in America. The statement was made to me that the lawyers' fees in America were more than the stealings of the Chinese directors and that the differences in the prices of labor make it possible to build roads here cheaper than in any other country of the world. Today it is found that they can make cars and engines in Tong Shan more cheaply than they can be imported from Europe, and Mr. Churchward, the man in charge of the locomotive works, told me that if America would take off her tariff he could make engines and cars here and export them to the United States and make a fair profit, notwithstanding the heavy freight charges. All of the cars on this Chinese road are built here. They are lighter than our cars and are more after the the English pattern. They are made with higher wheels than ours, the diameter being  $42\frac{1}{2}$  inches, while the American railroad wheel is, I believe, only 33 inches. These Chinese wheels cost more, but the English engineers think they are cheaper in the end, as they will last five times as long as our wheels, without being returned. It is wonderful that they can make the cars so cheaply, as nearly all of the materials have to be imported. The outside wood of all of the passenger coaches is of Siamese teak, the freight cars are sheathed with zinc, and the iron rails and the iron used in the making of the machinery of the road come from Europe. Even the ties have to be imported, but with all this the road has been solidly built. It is of the regular standard gauge. It is ballasted with stone and the cars move over it as smoothly as they do over the Pennsylvania road between New York and Washington. The length of the line which I passed over is in fact nearly as long as the distance between New York and Washington, and in my talk with the directors the Pennsylvania company was frequently mentioned, and many of its latest improvements will probably be adopted here. I saw in the car works samples from the Pennsylvania railroads of lamps and other devices connected with car making, and some of these will probably be adopted.

This Chinese railroad is far different in many respects from an American