

HOW OUR FIRST MINISTER TO CHINA GOT INTO PEKING.

Many Difficulties Put In His Way by the Willy Celestials—Deadlock Over the Refusal of Envoy John E. Ward to Perform the Kotow Before the Emperor.

BY JOHN E. WARD.

THE intense interest in the condition of the foreign embassies throughout the term of their practical imprisonment in Peking must excite some curiosity as to what transpired with the foreign ministers in that city more than 40 years ago.

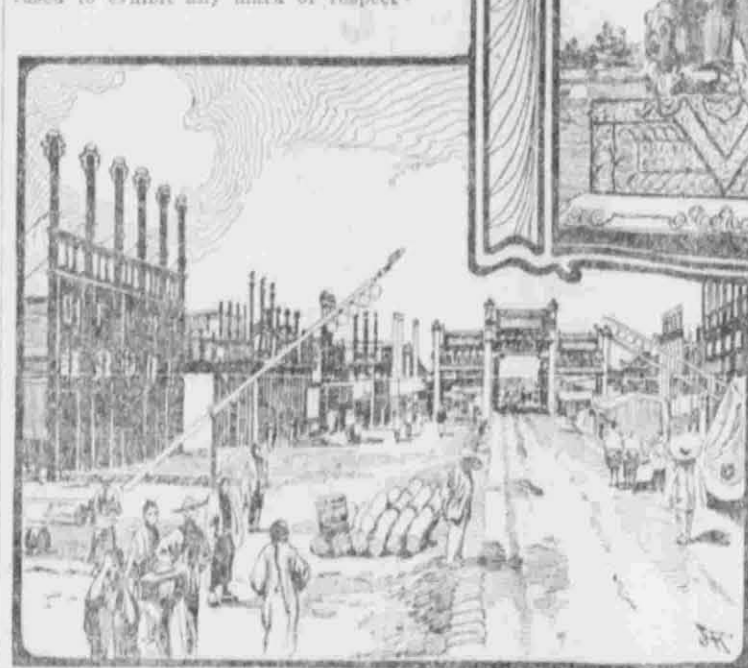
After four days' tracking against the current of the Pei-Ho, in making a distance of about 120 miles, we arrived at Tung Chou, the head of navigation and distant about 12 miles from Peking. Here we were again obliged to resume the mode of traveling in carts or on horseback.

The road from Tung Chou to Peking must have been magnificent in its early days. More than 20 years have elapsed since it was built, and it has subsequently received no improvements or repairs. The earth had been thrown up to such a perfect level that it was impossible to detect the least elevation or depression in its general line from Tung Chou to Peking. A floor does not exhibit a more perfect level. The width of the road is about 25 feet, the stones of which it is constructed from 12 to 16 feet long and hewed with such precision as to make a work of solid masonry. They were brought from the mountains, and, being of unequal solidity, some were more easily decomposed than others by atmospheric agency and worn away by the rolling of the wheels which passed over them. Thus, in some cases, they were separated from top to bottom by frost, which is here intense in the winter; or the wheels had worn out just their own width between two stones, where a little space had been created by the accidental starting of one or both of the stones in a horizontal direction. When a wheel struck and sank into such holes, the concussion was as fearful to the rider as to the carriage; but when both wheels dropped, as was often the case, it seemed as if the whole body was broken asunder by the shock.

After about eight hours of this torture we arrived at the eastern gate of the old city of Peking, which is called the Morning Sun gate. The wall of the city near this gate is in good order and is about 60 feet high. A five story guardhouse rises above it nearly 50 feet more, presenting altogether an imposing appearance. Passing through the gate, we entered on an avenue over 100 feet wide and unpaved. Crowds of men, women and children lined the sides of the carriageway in an unbroken line, so many as to be apparently numberless.

The private grounds of the emperor were the only ones in Peking which received care and attention. They were still preserved as in the days of prosperity. In one of my visits to the prime minister I passed by the gates of Earth's Repose, through which could be seen the walls of the Forbidden City

with the emperor, the commissioners resorting to every argument to induce me to consent to the performance of what I regarded as degrading and humiliating observances, while I obstinately refused to exhibit any mark of respect

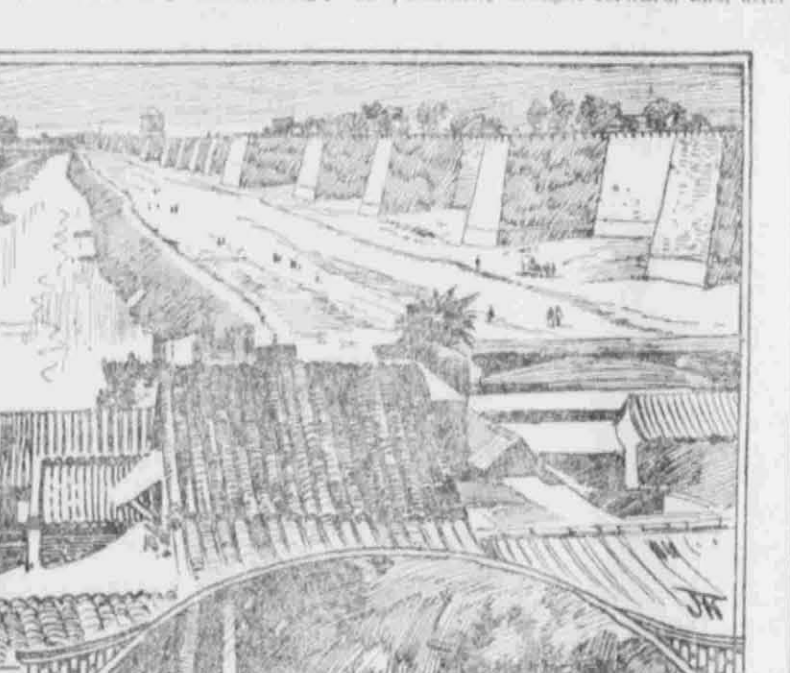


PEKING STREET SCENE, 1859

for the emperor which would not be expected of me in approaching the president of my own country. I assured them of the great respect I felt for his majesty, in which I knew I likewise expressed the sentiments of the president, who had also made them known in the letter of which I was the bearer. I had come to the capital to deliver that letter and to exchange the treaty, and I would regard an audience with the emperor as a mark of high favor to myself and respect to my country. But important at this juncture as a reception at court would be to China herself, I could not kneel when I came before the throne, for I never saluted my own ruler in that manner, nor did the representatives of the United States kneel when they came into the presence of any sovereign on earth. To kneel was, in my view, entirely a religious act, and I did so only in the presence of God. The treaty itself made no mention of an audience; I had not asked it; and now that they had spoken of it, I wished to state what my views on the point were, remarking that in other particulars I was ready to conform to the etiquette of the Chinese court when it was made known to me.

The Chinese were asked if they would willingly degrade their country by doing anything derogatory to its honor or in violation of their conscience; but as their conscience did not oppose these prostrations and there was no immediate prospect of their going abroad, they unhesitatingly answered that they would perform the kotow and do whatever was required of them at an audience in Washington, and they would even burn incense before the president if asked to do so. The judge added: "If we do not kneel before the emperor, we do not show him any respect; it is that or nothing, and is the same reverence that we pay to the gods."

The kotow (or kotow) consists of three kneelings and nine knockings of the head on the floor, but the consideration judge suggested that I would be let off with one kneeling and three knockings, as I represented a friendly



COOKS EATING AT ITINERANT RESTAURANT

commander in chief of the Chinese imperial forces. He was dismissed by Prince Tuan from his post when the latter seized supreme power in China.

Sheng, the tactful of Shanghai, is one of the richest and most influential men in China. Much of his fortune is invested in the telegraphs, railroads and other modern enterprises embarked in by his country. He is director general

of telegraphs in China, and during the recent crisis and present trouble no telegrams have been allowed to emanate from China except by his special consent. He is really violently antiforeign. Through his agency the news of the Peking massacre transpired.

The emperor, Kwang Su ("Succession of Glory"), is the son of Prince Chung, who was the seventh son of the Emperor

of Tsou-Kwang. The present emperor was born Aug. 15, 1871, succeeded to the throne in 1875 and married in 1893 at the age of 17 the present empress, Yehonai. Kwang Su is of feeble physique and incapable of wielding the authority which belongs to him.

Port Arthur was leased to Russia in 1898 for a naval base.

China, on the Shanghai peninsula, is a treaty port, with the best climate for European settlement.

Taku fort, now destroyed, were three in number, at the mouth of the Pei-Ho. Newchwang is a treaty port of the British concession in Manchuria, 120 miles north of Port Arthur.

Tien-tsin is a treaty port on the Pei-Ho 70 miles from Peking.

Shanghai is the largest and most important treaty port, Twelve miles from the mouth of the Yangtze-Kiang. Population, 4,000,000.

Wei-Hai-Wei (Luikuntan), the British base of operations, is a garrisoned port, with a large, safe anchorage.

Pei-Ho (north river) rises beyond the great wall, flows past Peking and Tien-tsin to gulf of Laotung. It is navigable from mouth to Peking—100 miles.



STREET OF LEGATIONS, PEKING



BRONZE LION AT THE SUMMER PALACE, PEKING

considered inadmissible after what had been said relative to the religious nature of the ceremony performed by native officials.

They also urged that ministers at European courts were required to kneel at an audience with the sovereigns, citing the pope, especially, as requiring that ceremony; but explanations were made to correct their erroneous impressions on this point. They remained unsatisfied, however, that such was not the case and concluded this conference, which lasted five hours, by saying that they must report to his majesty that the customs of the two countries were so unlike it was better that no audience should take place, much as he desired to do honor to the American nation in its representative. They had concluded their argument with patience and candor and exhausted every fact and reason they had for its support, feeling that the debate was an important one, and the precedent now given could never be exceeded on future occasions; they were ready to give up their claims to supremacy over foreign ministers, but were unwilling to concede an audience to them with less than was required to them by their own highest officials.

It was agreed at this time in my proposal that the business which had brought the legation to the capital should be finished, so that it could return to Peking on the 11th, and the commissioners disclaimed all restraint upon its movements. They said that they had placed policemen in the neighborhood of the quarters occupied by the legation to restrain the crowd which would otherwise throng; but there was no possible reason for preventing a few peaceable foreigners from going where they pleased.

A few days after the wily judge, Sieh, unexpectedly appeared with an agent to suggest a plan of compromise on the audience question which all the Chinese thought would succeed. This was that the commissioners should address to me a letter, stating that as the emperor had decided to grant me an audience it was necessary beforehand that I should state to them what form of obeisance I would make in coming before the throne, and they would then make the necessary arrangements. I replied to this that when I delivered the president's letter to his majesty I would render every mark of respectful deference which I did to the president, without addition or diminution. The draft of the reply which was furnished to the judge was perfectly satisfactory, although it did not cover the undetected question of kneeling. And he went through the details of the presentation in the most confident and cheerful manner, remarking that it would probably take place on the following Monday (Aug. 6, 1859).

The compromise which had been contrived between Chinese court ceremonial and the obduracy of republican independence consisted in placing the table on which the president's letter was to be laid before the throne in such a manner that its emboldened cover would conceal most of my person. As I approached it I should then bow as low as I had already proposed, and a chamberlain would approach on either side, as if to raise me up, crying out "Don't kneel!" Those of my suit presented with me would then go through the same ceremony, after which I would respectfully present the letter by placing it on the table, from whence it would be taken by another courtier, who, on his knees, would hand it to the emperor. In this singular manner was the character of the sovereign to be saved in the eyes of his officers, by my being restrained, as it were, from completing a prostration which was never intended to take place.

This unexpected compromise of the whole point was supposed to be chiefly due to the personal wish of the emperor to assuage himself, co-operating with the well known desire of Quilliam and Washana for the audience on political grounds. And when Sieh left the house of the legation with the drafts of the two papers to be submitted to the privy council he seemed to have no doubt that the matter would be satisfactorily arranged.

The arrival of Quilliam's dispatch was accordingly anxiously looked for, but instead of it the judge himself returned next day, more dispirited than ever with the information that affairs had taken another turn and that his mission had been outwitted. How much he had been in the matter himself to get fame and promotion by his skillful diplomacy of a delicate question is a point which admits some discussion. His majesty's decision now was that I should either actually touch one knee or the ends of my fingers on the ground he would not admit me to court. Of course this was refused, and the question of an audience finally decided in the negative.

The next dispatch from Quilliam indicated his unpleasant hesitation. His view required, as the necessary sequence of the arrival of an embassy at Peking, that its chief should see the emperor and deliver his letter of credence, but that the chief had in the present instance "firmly maintained his own opinion when consulted upon the ceremonies to be observed at an audience," and, jumping to his inference, he then said, "We are quite at a loss, therefore, to understand for what purpose your excellency has come to Peking," and concluded with the dilemma that "as the treaty of Tien-tsin must be exchanged somewhere, where is it to be?" I was at the capital, and nothing could be done officially until I had seen his majesty, which I declined to do, and yet the treaty must be exchanged.

The answer recapitulated the circumstances under which I had accepted the invitation of the commissioners at Shanghai to come to the capital, and quoted the imperial rescript made known to me by Hangfuh confirming that invitation. I then proposed to deliver the president's letter to them and afterward to exchange the treaty. In their rejoinder the same difficulty was involved in their minds as in the previous letter, and, this premise being granted, it would consequently be still more unfruitful for the treaty to be exchanged in the city itself. These difficulties, singular as they may appear to us, naturally grew out of the education and notions of these officers respecting national etiquette and the dignity of their sovereign. It is quite as well, perhaps, that this whole discussion took place with me, as in my visit I was left free on one important point, for not being ordered by my government to see the emperor, I was not anxious about doing so.

A delay of 36 hours took place before answering this communication, and the reply was ready when Judge Sieh came in to learn the cause of the delay. The Chinese were now apprehensive that the president would be disappointed by the final decision of the government was furnished.

It gave a summary of the proceedings at Taku at the time of the battle. It then proceeded: "At this juncture the American envoy, John E. Ward, in compliance with his engagement with Quilliam, came to Peking in his ship, as he was the bearer of a letter from the president of the United States. Our permission was accordingly given for him to bring the letter up to the capital, where he arrived with it. This day the ministers Quilliam and Washana have handed up the various dispatches received from him for our examination, and from them it is clearly to be seen that his sentiments are exceedingly respectful and indicative of the utmost sincerity and truthfulness."

"Let the letter which the American envoy has brought be taken, and let Quilliam and Washana be specially appointed to receive it for transmission to myself. In regard to the exchange of the treaty, it would be proper indeed to return to Shanghai to do it; but when we reflect that the envoy has already come over the seas for this purpose we now specially direct that the great seal be affixed to the treaty, and it be delivered to Hangfuh, the governor general, and let him exchange the ratifications with the American minister at Peking. After this has been done let lasting friendship and commerce continue between the two nations. This will show forth our great regard and kindness to people from afar and clearly exhibit the deep respect we entertain for truth and justice. This from the emperor."

Thus ended all further negotiations in Peking.

John E. Ward

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A SOUTH AFRICAN FAIRY TALE

Here is a Kaffir fairy story. It is called "Demane and Demanza" and is a very good example of the kind of story current among the dusky "boys" of South Africa.

Demane and Demanza are husband and wife, living together in a cave. Demane one day goes out to hunt, but tells his wife before starting that on no account must she cook any food during his absence, lest the cannibals, attracted by the smell of the cooking, find out the cave and carry her off and eat her.

Demanza directly after her lord has gone commences to prepare a meal, with the result that one of the cannibals knocks at the "door" of the cave and demands admission. This is refused him. So the cannibal goes and consults with his tribesmen, and they burn his throat, which changes his voice to a very smooth tone, like that of a girl. He returns to the cave and in this time admitted. The cannibal at once ties Demanza up in a sack he has

brought with him and takes her away to his own habitation.

Demane, returning home with a swarm of bees he has found, discovers his wife's absence. Forthwith he tracks the cannibal to his lair. The latter has left Demanza tied up in the sack while he goes to fetch some relations to share in the feast that is to follow. So Demane releases his wife and substitutes in the sack the swarm of bees, and the husband and wife at once make themselves scarce. The would-be feasters arrive, and the cannibal tells one of them to get something good out of the sack.

He attempts this, but is stung for his pains. So mine host himself, to disprove the charge of practical joking that has been unanimously preferred, goes to the sack, on opening which all the bees swarm out and sting him so unmercifully that he rushes from the cave and jumps into a pond head first and sticks in the mud at the bottom. Thus he dies, and Demane and Demanza appropriate all his wealth and live happy ever after.

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