

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.

RUINS OF NANKING.

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NANKING is the biggest walled city of the world, and it is one of the most wonderful cities of history. It was more than 600 years old when Christ was a baby, and its municipal hair

was gray with the age of 1200 odd years when Mohammed first saw the light of day. The present wall which surrounds it was built about one hundred years before Columbus sailed out from Spain to find a passage to trade with its people, and it has several times been the capital of the great Chinese empire. It lies in the interior not far from the Yangtse Kiang river, about two hundred miles away from the sea coast, and the viceroy, who now makes it his capital, has more power than President Cleveland, and he governs nearly twice as many people as there are in the whole United States. He has under him cities of vast extent, the names of which are unknown to the average American, and his income amounts to millions. He spends vast sums in his arsenals, powder works and naval schools, and he directs from this point a machinery of government which, though by no means so pure, has as many ramifications and offices as that of our capital of Washington. He has here the big examinations which test the learning of tens of thousands of Chinese students every three years, and his people are so noted for their ability and culture that Nanking has been called the Athens of China.

How shall I describe it?

These Chinese cities are so different from anything in America that I almost despair of giving a good idea of them. In the first place, Nanking is a walled city. All of the big cities of China are surrounded by walls ranging in size from forty to seventy feet high and so thick that two two-horse wagons could be driven side by side upon the paved roads which form their tops and the wheels of the wagons would not touch each other. Here and there upon the walls are guard houses and barracks which rise one and two stories above the walls and in which soldiers are placed to keep a lookout over the city and its approaches.

The walls are entered by great tunnel-like gates with arched roofs, and the doors to these are of heavy planks and timbers bound with sheets of iron riveted on with bolts. These are closed during the night, and the man who arrives after dark has to wait till morning among the beggar huts of the outside. It was late in the afternoon when I found myself with about a hundred

Chinese passengers in the rude ferry boat which takes the freight from the river steamers to the shore at the landing for Nanking, and I narrowly escaped spending a night out of doors. I was held for some time by a big Chinese official because I had not a passport from Peking, and when my servant had gotten our donkeys and had loaded up two Chinese coolies with our baggage the sun was low in the horizon and I saw a blind Mohammedan beggar kneeling by the roadside and saying his prayers as it went down. We had yet five miles to go before reaching the city, but we made the gates and got in before dark. During the journey, with the prospect of a lodging in a vile Chinese inn before me, I thought of the possibility of climbing the wall, but as I came closer to it I realized the futility of such an attempt. It would be almost as easy to crawl up the sides of the Washington monument. The walls rose straight upward from a wide moat to the height of an eight-story house, and the only broken spaces were the cuts formed by their crenellated tops. Had one of the soldiers on guard thrown me down a rope ladder I would have feared to risk the climb, and as I examined it I wondered at the expense of its building. We often hear of the vast sums spent upon the great Chinese wall. It was about fifteen hundred miles long, and it is larger than that about Nanking. These city walls of China have eaten up a vast deal more money. There are in the empire more than four thousand walled cities, and every place I have stopped in my tour up the Yangtse has these massive battlements about it. They are made just the same as this wall of Nanking.

The materials used are stone and large burnt bricks of a bluish gray color. These bricks are each about 15 inches long, 5 inches wide and 3 inches thick. They are put together in a solid masonry in the shape of two walls running parallel with each other and the space between them is filled in with earth and stones. This is stamped down and upon its top a paved roadway is made, upon which the guards walk and upon which in many places are old cannons, and near them piles of stones ready to be thrown down upon the enemy. The length of these walls is much greater than is necessary to inclose the cities. I have seen none less than ten miles long, and this wall of Nanking is thirty-two miles in length. The city of Nanking, which is bigger than St. Louis, occupies only a small part of the enclosure, and the road runs up and down over a rolling country, taking in small farms and market gardens, many of which stand upon the site of the great Nanking of the past. The distance across the inclosure from one wall to the other is more than eight miles, and during any other time than an exposition or convention period you could crowd all of the people of Chicago inside these walls and have room to spare. A mile of such wall must cost considerably more than a mile of railroad, and in these 4,000 walled cities it is safe to say there is something like 25,000 miles of fortifications or enough to have covered China with railroads. Many of these walls are poorly kept,

but if a big city should spring up in China today it would have a wall built about it, and this Nanking wall was thoroughly repaired three years ago. It cost the viceroy \$250,000 to patch it up, and you see the fresh mortar of today running in and out of the gray lines of 500 years ago.

The moat outside the wall is fully as interesting as the wall itself. This runs about the entire structure, save at the end where it cuts into the mountain, and at the opposite side of the city from the gate at which I entered it expands into a very pretty lake. The earth used for the filling of the walls is generally taken from the moat, and the excavation is so great that the Nanking moat ranges from seventy to one hundred feet in width. It is connected by a canal with the Yangtse river, and it forms the highway from it to the city. Although it is about two hundred miles from the sea, it is affected by the tide, and only small boats can sail through it. These bring, however, passengers and freight, and the moat swarms with craft, which sail about it from one gate of the city to the other, offering their wares for sale. There are hucksters of all kinds upon it, and fuel peddlers push or scull great rafts of reeds about through it, selling as much as one man can carry for about twenty cents. The moat is crossed by bridges at the gates, which, like tunnels, enter the wall, and some of these bridges remind you of the noted bridges of Italy. There is one at the south gate which is walled with stores like the Ponte Vecchio across the Arno at Florence, or, rather, more like the Rialto in Venice. Some of the canals run into the city, and the moat and canals in many ways remind you of the tamed water city on the Adriatic. It is to me a far more interesting city than Venice, and the wonders of its ruins are greater than those of old Rome.

The Nanking of today is built upon the foundation of the Nanking of the past, and outside of the present city there is a vast area, which was once covered with buildings. The Tartar city where emperors lived has dwindled into dust, and the marble and golden-tiled palaces of the past have been supplanted by the farms and gardens of the present. Fifteen generations ago there was here one of the most progressive monarchs of history. Nanking was then the center of Asiatic trade and culture. Foreigners from all parts came here to study, and the Persians and Arabians crowded each other upon the streets.

Today you see Jewish types among the faces you meet, and the city has a large population of Mohammedans. Many of these are the descendants of the strangers who came here in the days of the famed Chinese ruler Chu Hung Wo. This man started life as a beggar, but he organized a rebellion, which enabled him to conquer China and to establish his descendants on the throne. He was the founder of the Ming dynasty, the one which ruled China before the family of the present emperor came into power, and under which were accomplished the greatest things that the Chinese have ever done in architecture and public improvements. It was this man who built the wall about Nanking and established the capital here. The dragon, you know, is the imperial ani-