

like one of our western executives and he has a staff of interpreters who keep him posted on what is going on over the world. He subscribes to the clipping bureaus, and everything that is printed in Europe or America concerning China is sent here and translated for him. He has control of the Chinese telegraph system and it was he who introduced the electric wire into China. From his capital run now more than eight thousand miles of wire connecting him with the emperor and with the governors of all the provinces, and he has the news of all the world cabled to him daily. Last night a dispatch came which created a great excitement among the people here. It was that the President of the United States was dead. The consuls were all expecting telegrams corroborating it and a dispatch was sent to Peking stating the fact to the American legation there. Late in the evening, however, the message was repeated and it was found that it was the president of Peru, which country has a Chinese name much like that used for the United States, who had died instead of President Cleveland.

Li had the news of the Chinese treaty with America cabled him before the American consul or our minister knew anything about it, and during my talk with him I was surprised to find that he was well up in all news matters connected with the United States.

But let me describe the interview I had with this great statesman in his palace here today. It was arranged for me through our consul to Tien-Tsin, Mr. Sheridan P. Read, and the secretary of the Chinese navy, the Hon. Lo Feng Luh. This last man is the Dan Lamont of Earl Li. He is his private secretary and confidential emissary in all matters connected with foreigners. He speaks English and French perfectly and is well posted on English and French literature. It was he who acted as my interpreter with the viceroy and it was he who notified me that his excellency, the viceroy, would receive me at half-past four this afternoon. I rode to the palace in state in a box like chair covered with finest of blue cloth with linings of light blue satin. This was swung between two poles each twenty feet long and was carried by four Chinamen in a livery of blue and red cotton. They wore high black caps with turned up brims and on the top of each cap there was a tassel of silk of the gaudiest red. In front of me marched the Ting-Chi of our location, who was also gorgeously dressed, and he on horseback cleared the streets for us. It is about four miles from my hotel to the palace and the route lies through the busiest part of this one of the busiest cities of China. Leaving the hotel we went past mountains of merchandise stored in bags and lying on wharves along the Pei-Ho and cut our way through the narrow streets of Tien-Tsin. We grazed chairs with mandarins, who with their retinues and bands pompously pushed their way along. We stepped over ragged beggars lying in the streets clad only in coffee sacking and exposing their self-made wounds to our disgusted eyes. We passed hundreds, I might say thousands, of Chinese stores and workshops of all descriptions and going through wall after wall and gate after gate, crossing great bridges which closed to let us go over them, until at

last we came to a big one story building, the front gate of the wall which surrounds the hundred odd houses which make the residence of Earl Li. These houses are of one story and they are built about courts. The first court is guarded by soldiers and by two green wooden lions with hideous faces, and beyond this there are great doors on which are painted the Chinese gods of war. Before these my chair was set down and the Ting Chi went in to announce my coming. My Chinese card, a strip of red paper six inches long and three wide bearing the Chinese characters "Kow Ping Teh" (Carpenter) and meaning, I was told by the man who wrote the card for me, "energetic, bright, brilliant," was carried into the yamen and a moment later an official motioned me to enter.

I was first led into two reception rooms and was given a seat in the more honored one of the two, the place reserved for Chinese mandarins of high rank. It was rather ragged for a palace and for the ruler of such a vast people. It was, I judge, thirty feet square and twelve feet from floor to ceiling. Around the walls ran a divan three feet wide and so high that when I sat upon it my toes just touched the floor. This divan was covered with the cheapest red cotton cushions, each of which was about an inch in thickness and about three feet square. Above these against the wall there was a strip of Japanese red and blue flowered goods, perhaps a yard wide, and from the ledge of the divan hung down a Turkey red cotton curtain a foot and a half long. There was no carpet on the floor and the paper on the walls cost, I venture, eight cents a roll. The whole outfit of the reception room could be knocked up in America for \$25, and there was nothing ostentatious about it. The callers, however, made up in the gorgeousness of their costumes for the lack of splendor in their surroundings. There were mandarins in furs which must have cost hundreds of taels. There were officials in the finest of silks, wearing the costliest of jewels, and a moment after I arrived a servant brought in two cups of tea of a variety too precious to be exported to the United States. This tea was placed upon a little table which rested upon the divan, and it had not had a chance to cool before the secretary of the navy entered. He was clad in dark silks lined with the finest of fur, such as our belles use for the lining of their opera cloaks, and he had on his head a cap with a button of rank. He chatted with me as we sipped our tea, making a loud noise with our mouths in doing so, according to Chinese etiquette, and the conversation ranged from politics to photography, the naval secretary being much interested in stereopticons and wanted to know the best American makes.

After a time the word came that the viceroy was ready to receive us. We rose and walked out behind a gorgeous but somber official, who held my red card high up in the air before him and strutted like a drum major. We passed through hall after hall, going by lackeys who saluted us like so many automations as we went. We walked through long corridors running around open courts and at last came into a large parlor furnished in half Chinese half European style. Here near a Japanese

screen by a table stood a tall old man to whom the secretary of the navy bowed low as he introduced me. It was Li Hung Chang, the great viceroy of China. His personality impressed me even more forcibly today than when I met him in that same room five years ago. He is now seventy-four years of age, but he stands firmly and his long gown, which reaches to his feet, makes him look like a giant. He is in fact six feet two inches in his stockings, and the thick soles of his Chinese shoes add another inch to his stature. He has a slight stoop. His shoulders are broad and in his prime he must have possessed great muscular power. He is by no means an old looking man today. There are a few wrinkles in his cream-colored face, and his straggling beard is black mixed with silver. His eyes are black, bright and piercing and the eyelids are of the pronounced almond shape. He has high cheek bones and a full forehead. His cheeks are rosy, partially due to his health and partly to the application of electricity, which they receive daily to cure him of facial paralysis from which he for a long time suffered. His black cue is mixed with gray and his head when I met him today was crowned with a black satin Chinese cap, in the front of which glittered a solitaire diamond as big as the end of your thumb.

Li Hung Chang has a slender but powerful hand. His fingers are long and thin and on one of them I noted a magnificent ring of diamonds and opals. His costume was, in fact, a gorgeous and costly one. His gown was of the finest yellow satin, and his coat, which covered his body to his thighs, was of rich seal brown velvet, fastened with buttons of gold. His trousers were also of wadded satin and they were tied with satin strings about his ankles above his black satin boots. The stories I had heard of his kicking his officers made me regard these with interest. I had no fear that he would try them on me, but I noted their white soles were two inches thick, and that they might easily break a leg if rigorously applied.

Li Hung Chang received me with a stately bow, slightly bending his body, but not offering his hand. He then motioned me to follow him and conducted me into the second parlor, where he receives visitors of state. Here he seated himself at the head of a long table and placed me on the left, which is the Chinese seat of honor. The secretary of the navy sat on his right and acted as his interpreter. The American consul laughed at me when I told him I expected to get an interview out of the viceroy. He said the viceroy would do the interviewing and that I would be the subject. I found it even so, but between his questions I managed to interject enough of my own to get a deal of information concerning himself and his country. The talk commenced with his asking me how old I was. I told him and thereupon said that I hoped that if I lived to be seventy-four I would look as healthy and be able to work as hard at that age as he did. I said to him that he looked no older than he did when I was here five years ago, and asked him what was the secret whereby he was able to retain his wonderful youth.

As this was translated to him the viceroy's eye brightened. I could see the