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MIGHTY PEKING.

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THE destruction of the Chinese army at Pinyang in Corea, and the crippling of their fleet at the mouth of the Yaloo river, indicates that the Japanese threat that

they will march their soldiers into Peking before winter, is by no means an idle one. The Yaloo river is the boundary between Corea and China, and as it is now, the Japanese practically control the country. The territory of North China is very poor, and the Chinese will have to bring their supplies of food with them if they attempt another invasion. The Japanese will not need a large army to keep them out, and they can now center their forces upon China. Peking is by no means hard to reach. The ground between it and the sea is as flat as a floor, and if the Japanese can be landed on the east coast of the Gulf of Pechili, they will be within a few days' march of the great Chinese capital. The only thing that prevents them from getting near it by water is the big forts at the mouth of the Yaloo river. These are manned with Krupp and Armstrong guns, and Li Hang Chang's army is behind them. Wherever they land, they will have to fight what remains of this army, but a victory would mean the capture of Peking and the practical subjugation of China.

Peking is perhaps one of the least known cities of the world. I have paid two visits to it, and spent a month in it six years ago. During the present spring I prowled about its streets for days and devoted myself to making a study of the town and its people. It is an immense city. It contains about fifteen hundred thousand, but these are scattered over an area of twenty-five square miles, and the people as a rule live in one-story houses. The city is surrounded by walls which were built hundreds of years ago, and which must have cost many millions of dollars. These walls are in good condition with the exception of one or two places where the floods of last winter

undermined them and carried part of their facings away. It is hard to give an American an idea of one of these walled cities of China. The walls of Peking are sixty feet thick at the bottom. They will fill the average country road or city street, and they are as tall as a four-story house. They are so wide at the top that you could run three railroad trains side by side around them, and they are so solid that the cars would move more smoothly over these tracks than they do on the trunk lines between New York and Chicago. These walls are faced inside and out with bricks, each as big as a four-dollar Bible, and the space between is filled with earth and stones so rammed down that the ages have made the whole one solid mass. They are built, in fact, much like the great wall of China, and the bricks of the two are almost exactly the same. I have before me the brick which I brought from the great wall. It weighs about twenty pounds, or as much as a two-year-old baby. It is blue-gray in color, and is covered with patches of white lime mortar just like those that I saw in the broken places of the walls at Peking.

In approaching Peking, long before you get to the city, you see the immense towers which stand on the top of this wall over the gates which enter the city. These towers are as tall as a big New York flat. They rise nine stories above the wall, and they have roofs of blue tiles. They were used in the past as watch towers, and they have many port holes for cannons. There are thirteen gates which lead into the city, and the towers and walls near these are plastered over with proclamations and bills much like a theater bill board. The gates of Peking are merely holes through the walls, and they are about as wide as the ordinary street and perhaps twenty feet high. They are lined with stone and are beautifully arched. They are closed at night with great doors sheathed with iron, and they are paved with heavy slabs of stones. The walls of Peking are twenty-seven miles long, and the area which they enclose is irregular in shape, and it consists of two big parallelograms. The one at the north is the real capital of China, for it contains the Tartar city, the great government departments, the foreign legations, and the imperial city, in which, surrounded by five or ten thousand eunuchs, the emperor lives. The lower parallelogram joins the Tartar city. It has half a dozen temples, including the Temple of Heaven, which was burned down not long ago, and which is now being rebuilt of Oregon pine.

The Chinese city is where all the mer-

cantile business of this great capital is done. It is cut up into narrow streets, and it is filled with all sorts of stores. It has markets of all kinds, and its fur market covers several acres. It has its wholesale as well as its retail fur market, and I have gone out at 6 o'clock in the morning and found perhaps a thousand almond-eyed merchants dressed in gorgeous silks moving about through great beds of furs of all kinds. The furs are piled upon the ground, and you can buy sables for about \$3 a skin, and tiger skins for \$75, which will be worth twice that amount anywhere else in the world. You can buy the finest of ermine, and for \$10 you can get a coat of lamb's wool, of the kind that our ladies use for long opera cloaks. This Chinese city is a city of banks and of stock exchanges. I visited one morning the silver exchange. It was a room like a barn, and the people were buying and selling stocks just as they do on Wall street, yelling and howling and pushing each other like mad as they did so. It is a city of book stores, and there are some streets which contain no other shops. We have the idea that the Chinese merely live upon rice and on rats, and that their chief industries are the making of matting, of fans and of silks. The truth is that China does a vast business, and she produces all sorts of commodities. Nearly every one of these Chinese streets contains shops of all kinds, and the main business of China is not the supplying goods for the foreign markets, but the making of those required for her own people. They have as many wants as we have, and they require as good goods. The nobles dress in the finest of silk, and there are hundreds of stores which sell nothing but pictures. The art displayed in most of the paintings is abominable, but they are pictures nevertheless, and the Chinese pay good money for them.

I wish I could show you the markets of Peking. You can get as good meat there as you can in New York, and there is no finer mutton in the world than that of North China. The sheep are of the fat-tailed variety, and I saw many which had tails weighing over a pound. It is queer how they kill the animals, which they sell. They have no slaughter houses, and a sheep is often butchered in front of the shop and the blood lies on the ground while you buy. There are all sorts of fish, and they are always sold alive. No Chinaman would buy a dead fish, and in case you want to buy less than a whole fish at a time, the Chinese peddler will pull the fish out of the water, lay him squirming on the block, and cut a piece of quivering flesh out of his side for you while you wait. He does not kill the fish, and after you