

about
China's Capital.

Pekin is a collection of cities within cities. There is the Tartar city beside the Chinese city. Then within the Tartar city is the Imperial city the Forbidden city, which no foreigner is allowed to enter. As a great concession the foreign Ambassadors have been received in a hall at the entrance of the Forbidden city.

This Forbidden city is the most fascinating and mysterious place in the world. It surpasses any conception of fairyland that has ever been put in print. It is filled with stupendous palaces, marble bridges, walls of gold and silver, curious shrines and all manner of strange and fantastic productions of Chinese ingenuity accumulated for countless centuries.

Dr. S. Wells Williams, who was Secretary of the United States legation at Peking and is a famous Anglo-Chinese scholar, is credited with knowing more about this mysterious region of Peking, sometimes known as 'Heaven's Region' than any other man. While at the capital he won the confidence of a great many educated Chinese at a time when there was much less anti-foreign prejudice than there is now and thus obtained an invaluable store of information.

The only detailed description of the Forbidden city extant is given by Dr Williams in his 'Middle Kingdom.' He says that in the great tower above the south gate of the inclosure is a huge gong, which is struck whenever the Emperor passes through. Here the Imperial ruler receives his troops when they return in triumph, and here he confers gifts upon vassal potentates and Viceroy.

Passing through this gate one finds himself in a large court, where a small stream is spanned by five marble bridges. These bridges cross over into a second court, which is paved with marble and flanked by pillared corridors and porticos. At the head of this court is a superb marble structure, known as the Gate of Extensive Peace, 110 feet high. It is a sort of balcony where the Emperor, on New Year's Day and other festive occasions, receives the homage of courtiers.

Ascending a stairway and passing another gate one reaches the Tranquil Palace of Heaven, in which is the imperial council chamber, and wherein candidates for office are presented to the Sovereign. This is the richest, loveliest, and most magnificent of all the palaces. In a court beneath its walls is a small tower of gilt copper adorned with a great number of statues. Beyond this building is the Palace of Earth's Rest, which accommodates the imperial harem, superintended by the Empress.

Between this place and the north wall of the Forbidden City are the gardens appropriated for the use of the inmates of the harem—the wives of the Emperor, the eunuchs, and other attendants. These gardens are adorned with pavilions, temples and beautiful groves of trees, interspersed with canals, fountains and other ornamental artifices.

This walled imperial precinct is a veritable city of the Arabian Nights, and its truthful annals might compose many a volume of fascinating and romantic interest. It is surrounded by a deep moat, and the eastern part of it contains, among other buildings, the offices of the Cabinet and the Treasury.

North of these offices is the so-called Hall of Intense Thought, where periodical sacrifices are made to Confucius and other sages, and nearby is the Hall of the Literary Abyss—in other words, the library—which publishes from time to time a catalogue, which is an excellent synopsis of the best Chinese literature up to date.

At the north end of the eastern division are numerous palaces and buildings occupied by Princes of the blood royal and their relatives and families. In this same quarter is a small temple, to which the Emperor and his family go to perform their devotions before tablets commemorating their departed ancestors. Whenever he leaves or returns to his palace on the first day of the year, and on all other occasions of importance, the Emperor goes through elaborate devotions in this hall. The European Powers may find it necessary to decorate this temple as a punishment for the present Chinese outrages, because an affront to the memory of his ancestors is the greatest injury that a Chinaman can suffer. In the last Anglo-French war against the Chinese the allies desecrated the graves of the ancestors of the ruling Emperor, but the peculiar situation of the present ruler may make a difference this time.

The inclosure which surrounds the imperial palaces is called whang ching, and is an oblong rectangle about six miles in circuit, encompassed by a wall twenty feet high and having a gate in each face. From the southern gate, called the Tien an Man, or Gate of Heavenly Rest, a broad avenue leads up to the kin ching, and before it, outside of the wall is an extensive space walled in and called the Gate of Great Purity, which no one is allowed to enter except on foot.

On the right of the avenue within the wall is a gateway leading to the Tai Miao, or gate temple of the imperial ancestors, a large collection of buildings inclosed by a wall 3,000 feet in circuit. It is the most honored of religious structures next to the temple of heaven, and contains tablets of princes and meritorious officers. Here offerings are presented before the tablets of deceased emperors and empresses and worship performed at the end of the year by members of the imperial family to their departed ancestors. Across the avenue from this temple is a gateway leading to the Shie-Tsib-Tan, or altar of the gods of the land and grain. These were originally Kau Lung, a minister of public works, who flourished 2,500 years before Christ and Hiatsih, a very remote ancestor of Chau Kung. Here the emperor sacrifices in the spring and autumn. He always has to sacrifice somewhere at least once a day. This altar consists of two stories, each five feet high, the upper one being fifty-eight feet square. No other altar of the kind exists in the empire, and it would be the highest kind of treason to build one like it.

The north, east, south and west altars are respectively black, green, red and white, and the top yellow. The ceremonies connected with this worship are among the most ancient in China.

On the north of the palace, separated by a moat and surrounded by a wall more than a mile in circuit, is the King Shan, or prospect hill, an artificial mound nearly 100 feet high, and having five summits crowned with as many temples. Many of these show

the neglect into which public edifices soon fall. Another name for it is Mei Sham, or Coal hill, from a tradition that a quantity of coal was placed there as a supply in case of siege. From it a fine view of the city is obtainable.

The western part of this enclosure is occupied by the Si Yuen, or Western Park, which is the most beautiful place in the city. An artificial lake more than a mile long and a furlong in breadth occupies the centre. Its waters are covered with the beautiful lotus. A marble bridge of nine arches crosses it, and its banks are shaded by groves of trees under which are well paved walks. It contains several buildings partly in or over the water, and a number of gardens and walks in and around which are small artificial hills or rock work, supporting in a most wonderful manner groves of trees and parterres of flowers. This is a triumph of Chinese gardening.

On the western side is the hall for examining military candidates, where the Emperor in person sees the candidates for the army exhibit their skill in equestrian archery and stone slinging.

On the north of the bridge is a hill on an island called Kiung Hwatan, crowned by a white pagoda. Nearby is an altar forty feet in circuit and four feet high, inclosed by a wall and a temple dedicated to Yuen Fi the reputed discoverer of the silk worm. To her the Empress annually offers sacrifices. In the vicinity a plantation of mulberry trees and a lot of silk worms are maintained. Not far away, on the northern borders of the lake is the Temple of Great Happiness, by the side of which is the gilded statue of Maitreya, or the coming Bud, sixty feet high, with a hundred arms.

Across the lake, on its western bank, and entered through the first gate on the south side of the street is the Tse Kwang Kob, where ministers are received by the Emperor.

There are upwards of two hundred palaces in the enclosures of the Forbidden City and the Imperial City. Much gorgeousness is assembled within a small area but not even the sacred dwelling of the Emperor himself has modern plumbing, and the conveniences deemed essential to comfort in Occidental countries are conspicuously absent in the royal domiciles and official buildings. Everywhere there is gilded squalor and dirt thinly covered up.

If the Europeans make their way into the prohibited quarters there will be such a house cleaning as has not been dreamed of for thousands of years in the private quarters of yellow royalty. How some of the missionaries' wives would relish getting at the muss with brooms and scrubbing brushes, soap and dusters!

Outside of the Imperial city is the Tartar city, which is the greatest northern section in Peking. It is surrounded by a rectangular wall, about three miles on a side. In 1644 the Manchu Tartars, having conquered the Chinese and overthrown the Ming dynasty, took possession of the northern part of the metropolis and utilized it for barracks and residences mostly. Since that day, however, most of the property has passed into the possession of the Chinese, who at present constitute a majority of the population of the Tartar city. The southern part of the town is occupied almost exclusively by native Chinese.

Pekin, which is properly pronounced Peking, according to Dr. Williams, has a population at the present time of somewhat less than 3,000,000. Its name means northern capital. The high walls surrounding it are composed mainly of earth dug from the environing moat, and are faced with brick and stone.

At intervals of sixty yards square towers project, and similar towers stand on either side of each of the sixteen gates connected in front in every case by a semi circular fort. Each gateway is surrounded by a wooden building several stories in height, with painted portholes for imaginary cannon.

Save for the high lookout towers over the gates the city would rather resemble a walled encampment than a metropolis. There are no spires, pillars, minarets or monuments, only the varied colors of the tiled roofs, red, green and yellow relieving the monotony of the scene within the walls. Here and there are large clumps of trees, and before every official residence is a pair of flagstaffs.

Pekin has no manufactures and no trade in any proper sense. It is fed mainly by supplies from the southern provinces and by flocks raised in the northern part of Chi Li. The thoroughfares leading across it from gate to gate are broad, unpaved avenues, more than 100 feet wide. The side streets are lanes.

A Triumph of Science.
Eminent foreign scientists have found

out that a grasshopper's ears are legs.

'How did they ascertain that?'
'They put a hopper on a board and tapped the board gently.'

'Well?'
'The creature hopped away. Then they cut off its legs put it on the board again, and tapped the board as before, and it didn't hop away. It couldn't hear the tap, you see.'

'Gosh, what a wonderful thing science is?'

Too Diplomatic.

'So,' said the young man, 'your father doesn't seem to think well of me?'

'No, Arthur,' she replied. 'I sounded him on the subject last night, and I know by what he said that he will not give his consent to our marriage. When do you think we ought to elope?'

'Oh,' he replied, 'we must not elope just yet. Haven't you been reading about the trouble the civilized nations are having with China?'

'I've read some of the headlines,' the beautiful girl answered, 'but what has that to do with our dear, sweet, beautiful romance.'

'It hasn't anything to do with our affair, darling, but since I began reading about it I have learned a lot about diplomacy. We must not be too hasty about this matter. You see, your father has not made formal declaration of war. It would be wrong for us to strike—or run—before he does so. We must not assume anything. We may be able to settle the matter by diplomatic means it—'

'Well,' she interrupted, 'if your love is the kind that can wait for diplomacy, goodbye! I'm sleepy, anyway.'

Out on the street he stopped, looked up at the stars and said things unfit for publication.

Attracts Attention.

'Has the new boarder anything distinctive about him?'

'Yes. He spears bread across the table with his fork and drinks coffee with his spoon sticking up between his fingers.'

A Favorite With the Ladies.

'The census man was so kind. He didn't ask me how old I was.'

'He didn't?'

'No, he just asked me what year I was in.'



AMONG THE ROSES.