

ONE DAY IN SHANGHAI.



SHANGHAI is come and passed—that is to say we have come and passed. What a magnificent town, the Venice of the East it seemed to me, with its long procession of stately buildings in the Venetian Palace style on its Bund, recalling the Grand Canal and its procession of palaces, now unhappily recalling Browning's death. A little before midnight of the 17th, we anchored in the river of China, the fourth river of the world, the Yangt-si-kiang, in one of the southernmost mouths of its seventy-mile delta, and at daylight steamed up to Woo Sung, whence, at about 9 a.m., the agent's launch carried us up the Wang Po a two hours' trip to Shanghai. The five wise virgins, who had come over to assume the native dress (for which their feet were unsuitable), in connection with the Hudson-Taylor Mission in North China, waited to observe, and the first English words which saluted us were "Empire Brewery." I was more interested in a Chinese tea-house, and Chinese buildings with clusters of queer little turn-up-toed roofs. But we were all alike soon lost in contemplation of Shanghai, which burst upon us with a turn of the river, right in the corner being the bungalow house of Jardins, Matherson & Co., who, to use the expressive words of our captain, used to run "the whole show" in the East; and beyond, in quick succession came the great banks. Out in the stream lay big two funnelled P. & O. and Messageries boats and the British gun-boat Wanderer, a much handsomer craft than the little midget gun-boat, anchored a mile or two below, built in England for the Chinese Government and, though no bigger than a good-sized junk, carrying a huge 32-ton gun, which, however, has the serious handicap of only moving vertically; to train it horizontally one must turn the vessel. A hideous little wretch she was, with projecting chin, not to be compared in good looks even with the six war junks we had seen at Woosung. The Chinese call them ty-mungs, and in spite of their ungainliness they look rather picturesque with their scarlet mizens, and the scarlet boards they carry at stern and stair, ornamented, the former with eyes to see the way, and the latter with green and white stripes.

The mouth of the Yangt-si was full of Foo Choo junks with brown rattaned sails, and their rather elegant bodies obscured by the huge loads of poles they were carrying slung across them like the paniers of a donkey. These, too, all of them had goggling eyes painted on their brows, as had the pretty little sampans, with white Gondola hoods edged with blue, and scarlet bows, and sterns propelled by a single big scull at the back. The passenger boats are very queer things, with their tall, lanky, rattaned sails, ridiculously out of proportion to their size, as tall as the masts of a large steamer, worked by a whole wave of strings, like the stretchers of a Japanese kite; the masts themselves with nary a shroud or a stay, in spite of their ridiculous height, and yet the captain says that they are so firmly stepped that they are hardly ever carried away, and that they are the handiest boats imaginable for river work. Occasionally we passed a lorcha, looking, except for the rattan run across the sails horizontally at intervals, something like a *chassé nave*. These boats are generally sailed under the English flag to avoid the periodical squeezes to which the native craft are subjected by the mandarins.

The sampans are delightfully quaint and picturesque little things, quite gondolesque in their appearance, though anything but gondolesque in the motion imparted to them by the scull in their stern, which waggles them much as the tail would wag the dog if *vice versa* came in.

But to get up to Shanghai. The most noteworthy European building in the place is, of course, the handsome Anglican Cathedral, built, by the late Sir Gilbert Scott, of red and black brick—looking under the clear Chinese sky like one of the great brick churches of mediæval Italy. It was the first spot we visited in Shanghai, the first place I have ever visited in the mainland of Asia. A singer with a magnificent tenor voice was rehearsing an anthem solo. Except where the sunlight glimmered through the stained glass windows, there was a dim, religious light. One

might have been back in England. Truly the Island Queen is great, where subjects under alien stars the width of the world away, and in the teeth of the nation most stubborn in opposition, have built up a bit of England such as they build broadcast in her magnificent Indian Empire. Then we went off to lunch with a gentleman who made his delightful house our home while we were in Shanghai, for no stronger reason than that, like myself, he was an Oxford man. In the afternoon the first thing I did was to go off and take some photographs of some of the queer wheelbarrows used by the native population in place of jinerikishas, adopted from Japan, for the Europeans. They are a cross between a huge wheelbarrow and a jaunting car, and sometimes one will see a whole family of Chinamen on the two sides. More often one side is given up to luggage and the other to passengers. These wheelbarrows are about the size of a costermonger's barrow. There is a continuation of the Bund almost at right angles with it connected by a hog backed bridge, hog-backed because the Tai-Tai, a sort of native governor, both objected to a draw-bridge and objected to a bridge that boats could not pass under at the highest tide. Formerly a large revenue was derived from charging two cash (about 3-20 of a cent) for every barrow driven over it. The economical soul of John Chinaman writhed at this expense, and they used to get out of it in this way. There was no charge for foot passengers or burdens carried, so each barrow carried a pole, and when they came to the bridge the barrow man and the man in the barrow, unless he preferred paying the two cash, unshipped the wheel of the barrow, slung it on one end of the pole and the barrow at the other, and carried them over the bridge. The weight was nothing to a Chinaman. Twice yesterday we saw pianos in heavy packing cases carried slung on poles by only four coolies apiece. The jinerikishas are not so good as in Japan. They are commoner, and, in spite of their bright scarlet linings, dirtier and drawn by a much lower class of coolie, who does not understand anything; but they are cheap, only 38 American cents for a whole day's hire, and only 2½ cents for a short ride.

While we were photographing who should come by but the Chinese Governor, the Tai-Tai, followed by a tag-rag and bobtail in turkey red wrappers and with two long pheasant feathers in their caps, except the High Executioner, who had a high steeple-crowned hat all of red, and a sword sown up in red flannel. The Tai-Tai had a swell green palanquin. I couldn't make out what it all meant, and while I was gazing at them the Tai-Tai and his official got out of their chairs and disappeared into the public, his ragamuffins outside, except the man who carried the scarlet umbrella (a canister-lid shaped affair like the umbrella of the American toy called the Mikado), who acts as a sort of standard-bearer to show where his high and mightiness is. Opposite me I saw the gates of the English Consulate almost closed and the porter grimly on the watch. The Tai-Tai's followers were crowding round but I dispersed them by photographing them—of which they have a superstitious fear,—and asked the porter who they were, "anyhow." He explained that the Tai-Tai had executed a brilliant stroke of economy by not keeping servants, but only servants' clothes, loose wrappers of turkey red that will fit anybody. Then whenever he wished to go in state, as, for instance, to call on the British consul, he goes out into the highway and hedges, hiring the cheapest class of coolies, and dresses them up. He usually gets hold of an awful pack of thieves, so everybody has to be on what Madame Janzay calls the quivy (*qui vive*) when the Tai-Tai comes round. He advised me to go into the gardens and look at him, and to take my photographs as unobtrusively as possible, as they would consider it offensive.

I found the Tai-Tai by looking for the red canister-top umbrella, and only could see his back, a highly embroidered one of purple satin. He was down by the water's edge, seemingly playing counts, which was not a bad shot of mine, for I afterwards found out that, having promised the British settlement an extension of their gardens, he was considering the possibility of fulfilling his promise by reclaiming the land from the water.

In the midst of the whole crowd of the Tai-Tai and his officials, and the Consul-General, and the canister-top umbrella, and the Chinese nursery maids, I saw the familiar form of Robert, named after his creator, Sir Robert Peel, in spite of poor old Charles Mackay's, with the characteristic (shall we call it) eagerness of the Celt claiming a Celtic origin for "Bobbie." Robert, a tall young Robert of the lamp-post pattern, even in this far clime, was surrounded by nursery maids (Chinese). They have at least five kinds of police in Shanghai. Firstly, the orthodox and authentic Robert Snuffer, helmet and all; secondly, magnificent sikhs with the dignity of princes and the stature of giants, enhanced by high crimson silk turbans; thirdly, the plump Chinaman in English employ, and looking like Sir Roger Tichborne, in his Dartmoor dress; fourthly, the scraggy and ill-conditioned Chinaman out of English employ, who sits by the gate-house with an armoury of pole-axes behind him, and, fifthly, the red-legged French partridge, I mean gendarme.

Then we drove to the Chinamen town, as the coolies called it, passing on the way an evidence of Chinese cheap labour in a heavy road-roller drawn by at least a hundred coolies.

To reach the Chinese city one has to pass the French concession. Like all other Chinese cities, it is walled, and we had to pass through the gate-house first mentioned, with its row of pole-axes outside. We were beset by a guide, who at first asked 25 cents a head, but finally came down to 30 cents for the whole party, to be increased to 40 cents if we were pleased. The French partridge outside said that he was a reliable man. The moment we were inside the city we felt that we had done wisely in securing him, for, in addition to being full of the most villainous looking people, it is a labyrinth in which the stranger couldn't have found his own way. The streets are so narrow and the houses so overhanging that, except in the open spaces one can hardly see the sky, and one street looks exactly like another, and no one can understand a word you say. The Grand Bazaar at Constantinople is nothing to a Chinese city, it is not so oriental, so unsanitary, so unsafe, so vast, so seething with life. During our whole two months in Japan we had not seen so much of the East as in two hours of the China town at Shanghai. There is something rather alarming about a Chinese city, the ill-conditioned, scowling, innumerable people, the awful intricacy and shut-in-ness of the streets contribute to this. If one were set on, escape by one's own effort would be impossible. He who has only seen the sleek, orderly Chinaman of Anglo-Saxon communities has no conception of the dangerous look of the mandarin-squeezed Chinaman at home. Perhaps a few weeks' residence in China might convert me to a trade-unionist on the Chinese question. The moment we were inside Chinatown we got a taste of its quality, for human cess pits, with faces eaten away by disease and limbs withered or elephantised by ulcers are in your way and expose their horrors to excite your compassion.

The Chinatown streets are mere passages, with their sky still further curtailed by the overhanging upper stories and the innumerable signboards, mostly black, seven feet long, and with huge gilt characters on them, hanging down like the squashed salmon in a Japanese fish shop. All their sign-boards are written and hung vertically. Chinese shops are much larger than Japanese, many of them as lofty as Broadway stores, and they have no raised floors or dainty matting, because, unlike the Japanese, they do not take off their shoes. Ivory shops, and fur shops, and silk shops, abound, and there is a general evidence of wealth in the shops in fearful contrast to the squalor and disease without among the people who deal in cash, for a cash in China isn't worth much more than a dam, which is, I believe, a small Chinese coin, worth about the fifteenth part of a cent, so that when a man says he does not care a — it is easy to judge how little he cares. Our guide was very much astonished at our not wanting to buy anything at any of the shops with which he has squeezing arrangements. He did not know how blasé one is in shopping when one has lived a couple of months in Japan, nor how much he knew of prices in the East. On the other hand, he was very unwilling that we should look at any of the jugglers or acrobats. "By and by want money." Evidently there was no squeeze there. As he went along he made purchases. He spent altogether I think, at one time and another, three cash (3-13 part of a cent) in candies, and he received one narcissus bud from a boxful which a man was stringing into one of the flower tiaras which we saw the