

A Remarkable Oriental Experience.

A THRILLING STORY OF CHINESE TREACHERY.

CHAPTER II.

It is now necessary to leave for a little the narrative gleaned, so far, from the diary of Herbert Vanscombe, and to turn to events which took place nearly a year before.

In the summer of 18—, exactly a year previous to the day on which Herbert Vanscombe landed in Shanghai, a man of elderly appearance arrived in Yokohama by the San Francisco mail. It was his intention to proceed round the world at his leisure, and this was that, after several months in America, he landed in Japan. Whether it be from the fact that his disposition was a solitary one, or from the absence of introductions, that he toured alone amidst the glorious scenery and the idyllic peace of Japan it is difficult to say. That such was the case is the material point.

He was bent upon travel of a prolonged nature, for the reason which drives many a man from the dear old home—an unfortunate love. It had been a love affair; that is all with which we have to do.

Further than this, he was one who, at the age of twenty-eight, stood strangely isolated in the world; for his father's death, months previous to his departure from home, had left him at once an orphan, and a wealthy idler to fill his time as he might please.

Such was William Norris. It was natural that the lonely traveler should weary of the beauty of Japan. Thus it came that he decided upon making the excursion to Peking. Passing rapidly through Shanghai—far by chance he was in time to catch a departing steamer for Chefoo and Tientsin—he set out for the north. Hard travel he wished to have, and hard travel he believed he should have among the northern Chinese. He was right; there are but few places in the world where travel is at once so rough and crude.

There are several methods of traversing the distance of some eighty miles which separate the capital from its port: one by the river, which, winding to and fro through the flat country, approaches Peking as it flows onward to the coast; the others by road—firstly (to take the most luxurious and least used) in the mule litter, which is of the nature of a palanquin swung upon the backs of two mules, one of which precedes the other,—those who have been in Bombay may know a somewhat similar equipage borne by natives in place of mules. In this the traveler may recline, lounging with a fair degree of comfort, for hour upon hour;—secondly, some who have frequent occasion to make the journey, very often do so upon horseback; and, lastly, there are the mulecarts—one for the traveler, one for his guide—small, cramped, and without springs—

instruments of the divinest torture, and the most frequently utilized mode of transit between Tientsin and Peking. Traveling by the last-named by day and night almost continuously for two days, Norris arrived late upon the second afternoon, and indeed just before the closing of the gates, at the capital, worn out, as who could fail to be, with the prolonged jolting, the clouds of dust, and the heat of the Eastern sun.

At this point it becomes advisable to place before the reader's mind something of the nature of a sketch, however, in detail, of the vast city of Peking.

Peking consists of three cities proper—the Imperial, the Chinese, and the Tartar—each severed from the other, and again from the world as a whole day by a wall whose vast grandeur must be looked upon to be conceived. Within the outer walls, the main features are dust and ruins, and a total absence of anything in the shape of order, amongst dwellings scattered here and there, often at wide and irregular intervals, and in streets whose vast width is encroached upon without let or hindrance by the booths and stalls of the poor.

To be in Peking is to be in another world—a world which belongs to a far, far past, where one could almost imagine that the inhabitants have waked after centuries of sleep, knowing nothing and conceiving nothing save the desolation which has become their home, and amidst which they are content to live.

There is one beautiful spot in Peking,—the marble bridge, where in summer the still, lotus-covered surface of the lake beneath is broken only by the alighting of some curious bird, a ruthless shattering of the reflection of the verdure and temples and castles of the Imperial Park. But even here the atmosphere of a bygone age lingers in the air, sobering all that is fair and beautiful with the silence of the touch of time.

The chief part of the Imperial City is sacred ground. The traveler is a rash man who ventures by bribes, to enter its precincts: for the northern Chinese are a hard, brutal race, not over-scrupulous in dealing with intrusion upon their rights. He stands in the center of Peking. For the rest, as isolated spots—isolated in the sense of separation from the encircling ruin—stand the foreign legations within their several walls; and, lastly, the temples of the Chinese.

Two days sufficed to prove to William Norris that sight-seeing in the capital of China would be a whole day by a wall extreme. Distance was so great that most of the traveler's time was expended in the interior of the covered cart which conveys him at a snail's pace along the wide and uneven roads. Thus the morning of the third day found Norris leaving the city upon his way to the Great Wall.

That traveling in the interior of China, even at the present day, may be accompanied with danger few who know the nation will refuse to admit, and what it was not very many years ago those who have lived in China for any length of time will recall. It is there need to mention an individual instance? Let us recall Sir Harry Parkes; that name alone may speak.

It is unnecessary to follow Norris in his journey, to alight with him at Wan-shou-shan, to stand with him upon the hill Yu-chuan-shan, or to enter with him the Great Bell Tower. Suffice it, that he reached Nankou, little of interest occurring to delay our narrative. Nankou is a small village standing at the foot of the pass of the same name. Fifteen miles up the pass is the Great Wall separating Mongolia and China, a work of wonderful patience, twisting like a huge serpent over hill and dale till the eye loses sight of its meanderings amongst the mountains.

At Nankou itself there is a fragment of a minor wall still standing, through the gateway of which Norris, having finished such dinner as his guide had been able to provide, leisurely strolled, taking no account of the fact that he was then already at some distance from the Chinese inn. He was smoking—a luxury the Englishman must have wherever he may be, and scarcely feeling inclined to sleep, notwithstanding the stiffness of his limbs from the cramped posi-

tion necessary to maintain whilst traveling in the cart, he wandered onwards in the darkening evening, till it struck him that he was sufficiently far from the only tie between himself and civilization in this unknown land—his Chinese guide. He turned and began to retrace his steps.

Re-passing in a little time through the gateway in the wall, he noticed for the first time that the road here branched; and that whilst it had seemed a simple matter to gain the gateway from the inn, it now became a different question as to how to turn. It was growing dark; which of the three roads, he questioned, was he to follow? Whilst he stood considering the point, a number of Chinamen, in all about two dozen, who were seated upon the bank of earth which had formed by time against the wall on the left side of the gate, burst into uproarious laughter; whether from the fact of the difficulty Norris apparently found himself in, or at some remark regarding the European made by one of their number, it is impossible to say. Be that as it may, the laughter served to add to the annoyance of the situation. "You fools!" Norris muttered, turning toward them, an epithet which it was perhaps fortunate no one understood.

One of the Chinamen leaped from the bank, a great broad-shouldered, strapping fellow—a man of iron muscle, as these northern Chinese all are. "This way," he pointed with his hand, "this way," and Norris, fancying the man's disposition was friendly, followed him for a few steps, when renewed laughter caused him to stop abruptly. "What is the matter?" he asked, and the man immediately, with what intent, he questioned himself rapidly, had this man endeavored to lead him astray? His watch-chain hung across his white coat; that was the only reason, so far as he could see, unless, indeed, the whole was done for jest.

For a moment he halted when he had regained the gate. He had no fear; a strange absence of such feeling ever comes to him when he has most need that it should be so. He stopped, that he might show those upon the bank that he was as cool as they.

The would-be guide was by his side in an instant. Norris turned on being touched on the arm. "This way," the Chinaman pointed, choosing the second road; for answer Norris raised his palm—he was unarmed, perhaps it was just as well—and with the back of his hand struck the Chinaman across the face. It was at once a dangerous and a rash act; but Norris, it may be long afterward, realize his peril, or the fact that he had then, for the first time, nearly approached a death made horrible by Chinese cruelty and by the tortures which they know well how to use.

There was a shout of derisive laughter from the Chinamen upon the mound; perhaps that alone did Norris owe his life; for the man whom he had struck turned, with expletives upon them, and then, following the Englishman, contented himself with walking by his side (whilst a crowd surrounded the two), slapping the prominent muscles upon his bare arms in attitude of defiance, as though daring the other, in childish fashion, to repeat his act. It is more than probable that Norris had recovered something of his common sense, for he marched stolidly forward till, with perhaps a sense of relief, he recognized the mule-carts that stood in the court-yard of the Chinese inn.

He passed through them to his rough apartment unmolested. It might be thought that such an incident as this would have been sufficient to convince the traveler that it is better to yield to than face the enemy in their own country,—for enemies, one and all, the Chinese now became to Norris in his individual mind,—but such was not the case, as will be shortly seen, and as may be conjectured from the fact of his summing up the whole matter in the half-expressed determination, "I must have a pistol with me next time, in case of such things occurring."

The following day was spent on donkey-back up Nankou Pass to the great Wall, and back, worn out with a long day's work to the inn at Nankou. The next (on donkey-back again), to the Ming Tombs, with their wonderful approach, the avenue of animals, huge stone creations at even distances one from the other for the space of half a mile; and then by cart to Peking.

And now it was that Norris met with trouble. After a day's rest, he decided, by his guide's advice, to return by river to Tientsin. Having considerably shortened his itinerary, he first upon this as more pleasant method of traveling when going to the coast than the mule-cart.

This programme being decided upon, Norris instructed his guide to precede him, as his frequent hours, by cart to Tunchow, a town several hours by cart from Peking and situated upon the Peiho where that river approaches the capital.

Thus the guide was to leave at dawn, to proceed to Tunchow, and to have the house-boat hired and in readiness; and Norris, whose cart the guide instructed, was to follow at a much later hour. As he was finally dismissing the guide, Norris recollected a certain curio-store to which he was anxious to pay a second visit before leaving Peking; and accordingly he bade the guide instruct the cart to take him first to this curio-store, and thereafter to proceed to Tunchow. This command was given effect to, and all was arranged.

The guide left next day before Norris had awakened, and in due season the cart appeared. The Chinese carter is a leaden-brained creature; his heavy eyes and deadly stolid look seem to convey an atmosphere of opium, and he is not of the class of men to whose intelligence it would be advisable to confide too much. However, notwithstanding sundry doubts as to whether the man was capable of recollecting instructions given the previous evening by the guide, Norris took his seat inside the cart, and, somewhat to his surprise, was conveyed to the curio-shop as desired.

Having completed his purchase, he re-seated himself in the cart, and, jolting along the streets in what direction he knew not, he came to the Temple of Confucius. Now it had chanced that, one day, upon his first arrival in Peking, Norris had expressed a desire to enter this temple; but either from shortness of time, or the reason that there were greater sights to see, his guide, after stopping for a moment to inform him of the temple's name, had returned to his cart and then passed on.

Coming upon it now, it struck Norris that it was a pity to leave Peking, so to speak half seen; and immediately stopping his cart, he conveyed to the driver by signs that it was his intention to enter the grounds of the temple for a short time. There was little doubt but that the carter

understood, and, indeed, having been in Norris's employment for a number of days, he would have been almost absurd to have questioned the point, so, without misgiving on this score, the Englishman hastened away. An hour later cart and carter were still standing in the road, awaiting his re-appearance. Three hours later the state of matters was the same, save that the leaden-brained driver had fallen asleep amongst his master's pillows in the interior of the cart.

Whilst the carter still slept, a Chinaman issued from the outer gate of the temple, and, recognizing the position of affairs, took the small hand-bag, which was the sole remnant of his impedimenta that Norris had retained in sending his baggage in advance, and returned to the temple grounds.

Evening came; and the carter, awakened at length from his heavy and prolonged slumber, leisurely drove away, with what impression it is almost useless to conjecture. Perhaps he fancied that the day which had passed had been a dream; perhaps he thought he had done his duty, and need wait no longer; or perhaps he did not think at all, which seems most probable, judging from the fact that he returned forthwith to his own home, to disport for many days upon the proceeds of the tiao which he had earned during the past week.

Thus it came that the only connection which had existed between William Norris and the outside world at the time of his entering the Temple of Confucius was silently broken and destroyed.

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thrust aside thoughts of his nature. He was no coward, and it behoved him now to resist to the full the presence of mind; yet, without doubt, the situation was such as might cause the bravest to despair.

Looking around him as far as he could, for his neck was tightly secured to the ground, as were also his feet, he saw that, lying as he now was in the open air and in the shade of a tree, he had apparently been carried some distance from the spot where, in the struggle to escape, he had lost consciousness of the earth. He was now in a species of large courtyard, from which, so far as he could judge, there would have been but faint chance of escape, even had his bonds been removed; for he was shut in by buildings and by walls, high and insurmountable, upon all sides.

Whilst he looked upon the scene, he thought that he could be, that he was destined to come to long to die in the after-days, and to long in vain.

How long he had been lying thus bound Norris was unable to say, only that he must have been unconscious for a very long period, he judged roughly from two facts: the first, that the sun appeared to be sinking; and the second, that he was alone, for he rightly conjectured that had he regained his senses at an early period, some of the Chinamen would probably have been with him, waiting for his return to life. As it was, they had possibly grown weary of waiting.

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TRACKING A CARIBOU.

Snow-Shoeing and Crawling to Get at the Big Game.

A glance over a sportsman's experience will perhaps convey an idea of what still-hunting elk and caribou means when the animals have enjoyed the doubtful advantage of a slight acquaintance with man's murderous methods.

Now, first as to the caribou—a keen-eyed, shy, fast-trotting, sturdy fellow, and right worthy game for any man's rifle. Two varieties of this species—the woodland and the barren ground caribou—inhabit the American continent. The woodland variety is found in Maine and certain extreme northern portions of the United States, notably about the headwaters of the Mississippi River and in the extreme north of Idaho. The barren-ground caribou does not generally range as far south as the international boundary. In Canada caribou are much more widely distributed. They are plentiful in Newfoundland, scarce in Nova Scotia, more numerous in New Brunswick, and abundant in Quebec and Labrador, and fair numbers of them haunt the wilds of Northern Ontario (especially the north shore of Lake Superior) and portions of Manitoba. In British Columbia they abound among the mountains, and not infrequently great herds are seen defiling from some cañon or moving down some mountain side in Indian file, and looking at a distance like a pack-train.

The best caribou-shooting may be had in Newfoundland and British Columbia, but Quebec and Northern Ontario yet offer rare good sport to those who like roughing it.

During the winter of '89, says E. W. Sandys in *Outing*, I was temporarily located at a point on the magnificent north shore of Lake Superior, my companion being a half-breed hunter who bore a resonant Indian title too long for insertion in these pages. When he wanted to travel light he bore the name of "Jo," which will answer for the present. It was cold up there in the icy breath of the Great Inland Sea, but we were snug enough in an old railway construction log camp, and had fairly good sport with grouse, filling up time attending to Jo's lines of traps. Between Superior and the "height of land" is a perfect network of lakes and streams, large and small; the country is very rough and rocky, varied with great barrens, muskegs, and beaver-meadows. Vast portions are densely forested, and others carry only ghostly, scattered "rampikes," showing where fires have swept. Our headquarters were the log camp referred to, but we had a temporary camp at the end of a line of traps some ten miles inland, near the head of a chain of small lakes, famous in the annals of the fur trade. From it westward extended an immense barren for miles after mile, bounded by a gray-blue wall of forest.

One night, while we were at the little camp a heavy fall of snow redressed the hard-featured landscape, and Jo and I fell to discussing the chance for caribou. About daylight we turned out, and Jo stood for a few moments reading the sky and sweeping the barren with those marvelous aboriginal eyes of his, which could count a band of animals farther than I could see them. Presently he grunted softly and exclaimed, "Dar um car'boo!" and pointed westward. I looked long and earnestly, and at last made out a distant object moving slowly over the snowy barren. Getting the glass, I focused on it and discovered that it was indeed a caribou—a lone bull evidently—as no more could be found.

After hurriedly feeding, we stuffed our pockets with bread and meat, felt that matches, pipes, and "bacoo" were in the proper direction of our vanished game. "Car'boo all right; teed day on moss Bymby find um more car'boo," said Jo, and I guessed that he liked the prospect. It was a cold, gray day, a sharp breeze blew directly across the barren, and now and then a few snowflakes sifted down, hinting of another downfall, though there was already more snow than we could see. But there was little danger of anything serious, and we didn't trouble about the weather. After tramping for about three miles, Jo discovered the tracks of the caribou, but the beast itself was not in sight.

Jo decided that he would work across the barren in case the game had doubled on its course, and leave me to follow the track. "Me go cross, look long um tree. You run track, bymby mebbe you find um car'boo," and he waved his hand, indicating that he would cross and then scout along the woods on the farther side.

I moved ahead rapidly, while Jo was in the open, being anxious to get far enough in advance of him to forestall all possibility of his hindering me. I had followed the track until it was nearly noon, keeping a sharp lookout ahead, before I caught a glimpse of the bull browsing quietly near the edge of the woods. A long look through the glass told me that he was a magnificent specimen, bearing a particularly fine set of antlers, and that he was feeding near cover which promised a comparatively easy approach within certain range. To obtain this splendid trophy was my firm intention. Patient, skilful "creeping" counted for anything. Working carefully well to leeward the shelter of the dense timber was at last safely gained at a point some half mile from the game. I had already put in a lot of hard work and was half-winded, but the prospect sustained me. Once safe in cover the shoes were removed, and, gliding, stealing, fitting, shadow-like, from tree to tree, now crouching in the line of a bowlder now crawling and wriggling painfully over a snowy open patch of moss, I at last gained the edge of the timber within 175 yards of my meat.

He was standing with his rump to me, and his nose occasionally sought the moss, only to be raised in a moment and thrust into the wind while the gentleman chewed a mouthful. About half way between was a goodly clump of brush, overgrowing some scattered bowlders, while the space between my shelter and the brush was filled with little hummocks and hollows, showing where the low growth, moss, etc., upheld the snow. If once gained the brush and nervous kept steady he should drop in his tracks. I hesitated for a moment between waiting for a broadside shot from where I was, or attempting to crawl to the brush, then got down on hands and knees and began the difficult journey. The hummocks were smaller and hollows shallower when reached than they looked at first, and when half way across the dangerous space a large question of wriggling along it became inevitable, but I had faith in the wind, and was wriggling doggedly forward when from a clump of moss not twenty feet from my nose a grouse walked quietly forth clucking softly to itself in regard to my probable business.

Here was a pretty position. Of course, I didn't dare flush the grouse for fear of alarming the caribou, and for long agonizing moments I lay there in the snow staring at that infernal bird, while it eyed me dreamily and chuckled in an expensively commiserating fashion, until the cramp-knot

in my leg grew hard as a baseball, and I tumbled and raged and groaned inwardly. At last the fool bird satisfied its curiosity and trotted demurely away, and when it had got to a safe distance I straightened my cramp and wriggled on to the tuft whence the grouse had come. Inch by inch I raised my head until a clear view was possible of the bull's feeding ground—he had vanished as though the earth had swallowed him! Hastily glancing up the barren, I caught sight of him walking smartly along a good four hundred yards away. He was not alarmed; he had neither heard, seen or winded me. He had merely decided to move along. It was one of those maddening brute whims that checkmate the still hunter. I examined the rifle cover to make sure that all was right. Then, after a good stretch to ease my cramped muscles, I watched the bull and nursed my hard luck.

But chance favored me in the next move. The caribou, after going about half a mile, suddenly turned across a barren and headed for the timber on the farther side, at the same time edging slightly in my direction. This course kept him well to windward, and when he finally approached the distant cover I started for him again. It was a long, hard task, to cross the barren in a crouching position, but finally I managed to get behind him safely and followed the track. I was now very tired, for the sneaking was heavy, but the chase was leading homeward. I was mad all through and came to fight it out on that line till darkness came. Presently it began to snow and in half an hour the air was thick with soft-falling flakes. This was in my favor, save that I sometimes lost sight of the bull, only to rediscover him walking steadily along headed direct for the camp. My only hope was that he might halt to feed. He was going about as fast as I could, and so for two good hours we reeled off the miles at an exercising gait. At last the snow almost ceased, but the air was darkening fast, and I guessed we must be within short distance of camp.

While I was endeavoring to figure out my exact whereabouts the bull halted in an open space, bordered on my side by clumps of good cover, and began to feed. My weariness was forgotten in a moment; luck had turned my way at last, for he was in precisely the best position for me that he could have chosen in the whole barren. Sneaking rapidly on as far as was safe, I once again doffed shoes and got down on hands and knees and crawled, and crawled, until the cover was gained, and my victim stood broadside on, not eighty yards away. He was feeding busily and had no more ideas of my presence than I had of his. Carefully I raised up my knees and waited one moment to pull myself thoroughly together for the shot that must needs decide the matter. A last glance at the distance, and at the sight to make certain that it was at the lowest notch and I thought to myself: "Now, my son, I surmise I'll just settle for all this tramp. If I don't drop you."

"Whang!" the roar of a rifle sounded from a clump to my left, a stream of fiery smoke shot from the bush, the bull gave a tremendous lunge forward, and went down in a heap. For an instant I was petrified with amazement; then leaped to my feet prepared to do I hardly knew what. From the brush near by rose a lank figure, a coppery face peered for a moment, and an unmistakable voice muttered, "Gess I down um