

Military Campaigning In Northern China

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Competent judges believe that campaigning in North China by European and American troops will involve greater hardships than Occidental troops have ever been called upon to endure.

The early part of the summer about Peking is usually dry and hot, and the last eight or ten weeks have proved no exception to the general rule. But, beginning about the middle of July, torrential rains, which flood the entire plain about China's capital and all but stop the traffic across it, generally prevail for a short season. This period of heavy rains is accompanied by high winds which sometimes are very destructive, while along the coast dense fogs are the rule, the atmosphere being heavily charged with humidity.

The entrance to the Gulf of Peichili lies through the narrow straits between Chifu and Fort Arthur, which are thickly studded with rocky islands, a veritable graveyard of shipping. In proportion to the tonnage passing through there are more vessels lost in these straits than in any other similar waters in the world, and if the trouble in China is not quickly quelled many other war ships and transports besides the Oregon will come to grief in these treacherous waters.

Even those that pass the dangerous straits and anchor at Taku will not be much safer, for there is no harbor there; nothing but the open sea. The coast is low and the mud flats, which extend for miles, make landing almost impossible. The tides are high and should the autumn winds be as severe as they are nearly every year, more than one of the foreign vessels will find its last resting place on the mud flats of Taku.

A Vast Marsh.

From Taku to Tien Tsin the country is a vast marsh, which the natives have attempted to render fit for cultivation by draining it with numerous ditches, but as the river is easily navigable to Tien Tsin by the gunboats of lighter draught the troops will likely be taken to that point for disembarking. It would be folly for them to land at Taku and attempt to go by railroad to Tien Tsin, owing to the danger of the rails being torn up. And, though the distance is only twenty-seven miles, it would be madness to try to march over the territory, for it is well nigh impassable because of its marshy nature and its labyrinth of ditches.

It is unfortunate in the extreme that the relief force under Admiral Seymour was forced to turn back from its attempt to reach Peking. In their early stages Chinese uprisings rarely include any very large proportion of the population, there being always many who wait to see whether a demonstration shows signs of being successful before taking sides; the turning back of the relief force has undoubtedly resulted in a great addition to the Boxer forces and this will render the ultimate relief of Peking much more difficult. Then, too, the Chinaman is a fatalist and a predestinarian of the most pronounced type. Being led in such movements by fanatics who claim to have rendered themselves immortal and to be able to extend the same immortality from death and wounds to their followers, they fight with the greatest bravery and desperation as long as they appear to be winning, and there could, of course, be no greater proof of the efficacy of their charms and incantations than their success in turning back the relief force. Many who have been doubtful about the outcome of this uprising will now feel satisfied, therefore, that it is really the great movement which has long been expected to sweep the foreign devils into the sea.

For this reason the troops which lead in the new movement toward Peking may expect to encounter some of the fiercest and most desperate opposition European forces have ever encountered.

But the Chinaman is quick to see when the tide is going against him; he is always looking for some sign or omen indicative of the favor or disfavor of the gods. When he sees a few of his "immortal" leaders laid out cold he quickly loses faith in the charms on which his own safety depends and acts on that ancient Chinese proverb which duplicates the Occidental saying: "He who fights and runs away may live to fight another day." When this spirit once possesses a Chinese army you could not get 10,000 of them to stand against 100 white men.

Must Be Got "On the Run."

Here is where great loss is likely to result from the exercise of too great caution. A Chinese army, once in retreat, can be pursued with perfect safety, if only it is closely followed. In fact, as leaders in retreat, the Mongolians are in a class by themselves and it is only when the pursuit is so long delayed that they discover some new omen or charm on which to pin their faith that they can be persuaded to make another stand. The relief force under Admiral Seymour made the characteristic British mistake of taking the hardest way. The system of frontal attacks which proved so disastrous in South Africa was straightway repeated before Peking. The country west of the Pei Ho is full of swift and treacherous streams and the whole plain is a big swamp. It would be almost impossible to march across it without opposition, yet the relief force started out across it over the railroad, whose destruction was

known to be one of the main objectives of the hostiles.

It was preposterous to suppose that 2,000 men could protect eighty miles of railroad running through an unfriendly population of 8,000,000 or 10,000,000, so when the relief forces reached Liang Fang, half-way between Peking and Tien Tsin, they found the railroad destroyed ahead of them, their communication cut in their rear and themselves literally smothered in the mass of people about them. The Chinese cart road from Tien Tsin to Peking follows the western bank of the Pei Ho until a short distance below Tung Chow, where it turns west to the capital. The proper route for the relief force to have taken was to go by boats up the river to Tung Chow. Disembarking there they would only have had to march twelve miles west over easy ground to reach Peking.

If, however, the opposition was too strong or the fighting too severe to make the attempt in boats, then the forces should have marched up the east bank of the river, along which a low but continuous watershed runs; thus for the whole march they would have had the river between them and the Boxers, who were busy tearing up the railroad.

China's Bad Water.

The relieving force suffered from lack of water, and this is one of the greatest dangers to be encountered in campaigning in



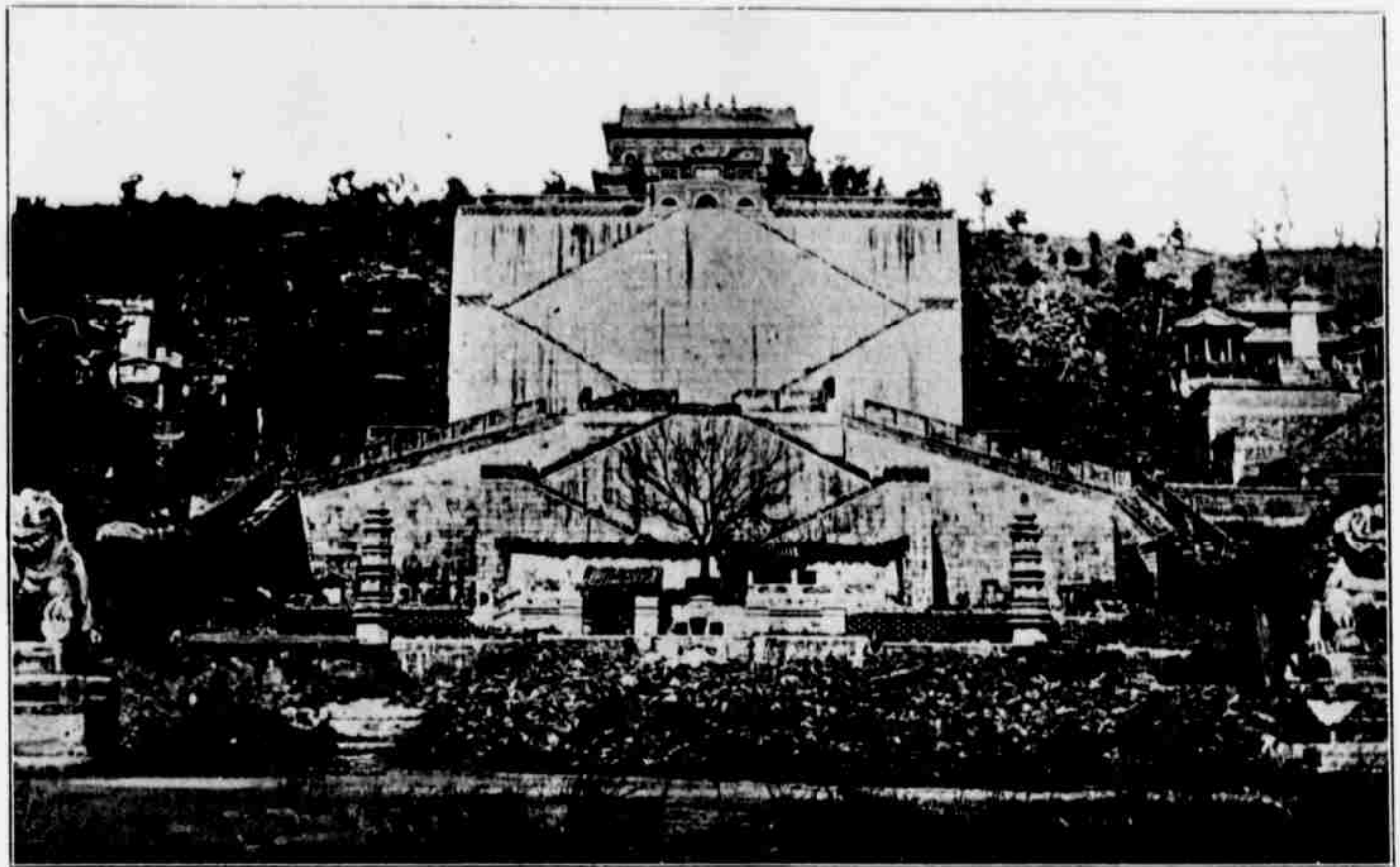
CHINESE PEDDLER.

China. The country has been so thickly populated for so many centuries that it is one vast graveyard, and the graves are not made by interment, but by setting the coffin on the ground and heaping the earth up around it. Then, too, there is no system of sewerage or drainage, except into cesspools, which often stand almost alongside the wells that supply the various communities. The water, therefore, is always reeking with the germs of typhus, typhoid and that fearful Oriental dysentery that makes living skeletons out of the strongest men in a few weeks. The Chinese only manage to escape these epidemics by boiling all their water and drinking it hot, and the troops campaigning in China must follow this same plan, unpalatable though the water may taste when so treated, or they will lose 100 by the dread disease mentioned for every man that is lost in fighting.

Quarantine is unknown in China, and it is common to see men all broken out with smallpox lying along the streets. The Chinese regard smallpox much as we do chickenpox, as something that everybody must have; in fact, among them, measles is much more feared.

The troops moving in China at this season will find the country full of the finest gardens and many will doubtless yield to the temptation to sample the numerous greens and vegetables, but let them beware, for the method of fertilizing the fields and gardens is such that all green things are poisoned with the same germs that taint the waters. As a rule vegetables and fruits are safe to eat in China after they have been thoroughly cooked.

It will be particularly trying on troops who have been serving in Cuba, the Philippines or India to be transferred at this time to North China. The rainy season is over by the last of August and the falls and winters are dry and cold, while frequent storms of wind sweep the plain and raise



WOM SHO SHAN (MYRIAD AGES HILL)—THE SUMMER PALACE WHERE THE EMPRESS IS SAID TO BE IN HIDING.

such clouds of sand and dust that traffic is stopped. These sand storms have played no unimportant part in the history of China. Both the Mongols and the Manchus, being northern men and accustomed to them, have reaped great advantage from them, more than once successfully attacking the southern Chinese while the storms were in progress; the stinging sand and gravel of the storms demoralizing the southerners utterly.

Winter in North China.

Frost comes about the middle of October and about the last of November the steady cold sets in and freezes up the river, which stays closed until the last of February or the middle of March. There are no snows to amount to anything, a few flurries, perhaps, which amount to six inches, say, in a whole winter. The mean temperature for the winter months is not much over twenty degrees. It seldom warms up enough to thaw, while it frequently drops to near zero, so the men will need generous supplies of warm clothing and bedding.

Most of the troops now going to North China will doubtless have to winter there, for it is unlikely that quiet will be restored before the closing of the river in November and after that it will be impossible for them to leave the country before spring. The wintering of such forces about Peking will be a difficult problem, for there are no decent camping places about the city. They might be placed on the top of the city wall, which is fifty or sixty feet wide and well paved, but to keep the troops in the city would only be to irritate the people and endanger the health of the men. In the hills about ten miles north and about fifteen miles west of the city, however, there are extensive temples which are used as summer resorts and stopping places for pilgrims and these structures would make excellent quarters for the troops. There, too, are magnificent springs which would furnish an ample supply of the best water and the coal mines at the foot of the hills would give plenty of fuel. A short military road across the plain would place them in close touch with the capital.

So little interest has been taken in China by this country that an adequate map of it is not to be found in the United States. Even the War department has no map of value and has been at a loss to know what provision to make for our troops that were being sent there. It is amusing to read that the transport Fort Albert carried 100 mules to Taku, when north China's mules are probably the largest and most plentiful to be found in the world.

Much of the hostility toward foreigners that has been displayed in the present outbreak has been due to the harshness of the

foreigners in dealing with the Chinese, particularly that of the Germans in Shantung, and unless great care and consideration is shown toward the non-combatants the occupation of Peking instead of bringing quiet will inflame the whole empire. The Chinese are not savages, nor even barbarians, and, while their customs and manners may seem peculiar to us, it should be remembered that they have been in force for many centuries longer than ours have prevailed. Their prejudices and superstitions must be respected and their graves and shrines not inviolate. Firmness with a due consideration for their peculiar point of view will quickly restore peace, but harshness and injustice will simply kindle a fire that will light up the whole world.

Bunch of Short Stories

A Coney Island excursion steamer was leaving New York with but few passengers aboard, relates Collier's Weekly. The boat had just cast off when a stout gentleman with a very red face rushed down the pier and flourishing his stick shouted: "Hey, captain! put back—back her quick. Here's a large party wants to go."

The captain was at first derisive, but finally shouted from the pilot house: "How large is the party?"

For an instant the fat man hesitated. Then he yelled back: "Between sixty and seventy."

As soon as the captain heard this number he instantly ordered the steamer back and made fast again. The fat man waddled across the gang plank, and picking out a nice deck seat fanned himself with his straw hat. Meanwhile the captain and his crew waited for the party to arrive. After waiting five minutes and more the captain turned impatiently toward the stout gentleman and asked:

"Where's your party between sixty and seventy? This boat can't wait all day for them."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the fat passenger with a bland smile. "I'm the party; 65 today, sir."

The captain's face grew redder even than the passenger's as he furiously rang the bell to steam ahead, but the fat gentleman at once became the hero of the boat.

"I never hear anybody speaking of a 'horny-handed son of toil,'" said a Kentucky colonel to a Washington Star man, "that I don't think of a race for the legislature which took place in my state a number of years ago between Tom Stuart, then editor of the Winchester Democrat, and I. N. Boone, a descendant of the great Daniel and at that time holding the office for which Stuart was making the race. Stuart was a

young man, very progressive and quick of mind, while Boone was well along in years, slow of thought and action, and especially proud of the fact that he was a representative of the farmers. So zealous was he in this regard that he carried it to the excess of almost total abstinence from water for washing purposes, and he would let his hands and face go unwashed for several days at a time.

"Stuart was quite the reverse in his ideas of cleanliness and at one of their joint discussions he gave his opponent a blow that fairly knocked him out. Boone was making his regular speech, and at the proper place in it he referred to the matter of his relation to the toiling masses.

"My friends," he said, holding up a pair of hands that looked as if they hadn't been washed in a week, "to let you see for yourselves that I am a horny-handed son of toil I ask you to look at these hands, and," turning to Stuart, "I would ask my pale-faced young friend from the city what he thinks of them?"

"Stuart was on his feet in a minute. "I do not desire to embarrass my distinguished opponent, ladies and gentlemen," he said with a bow, "but I would say that I think they need soap and water."

"It was such an apparent case that the crowd took hold at once with a shout and Boone was completely floored, and later Stuart was elected."

Adlai Stevenson is a better democrat even than he is a story teller, though in the latter role he comes second to but few. Members of the Iowa State Bar association recall with pleasure Mr. Stevenson's appearance at a banquet given by that organization in Sioux City last year. The nominee for vice president was at the time stopping there at the home of his sister, Mrs. E. S. McCaughey. He was invited to attend the banquet and was quite the lion at the feast, at which no wine was served, and when he was called upon by James O. Crosby of Garnaville, Ia., president of the association and toastmaster for the occasion, he arose and remarked that, inasmuch as he was not prepared to make a speech, he would tell a story. The story was about a man who went to a small prohibition town in the state of Maine, and while there was seized with a great, abiding thirst for whisky. There being no saloons, he tried a drug store. There he was told he could get whisky only on the prescription of a physician. He called upon a doctor, who refused to give him a prescription because he could find nothing about his constitution that was wrong.

"Well, what am I going to do about it, doc?" inquired the thirsty man in tones of desperation. He would have been willing to contract the smallpox for the taste of a bit of hot stuff at just that moment.

The doctor was a good-natured sort of a fellow and in a wise sort of tone he dropped the suggestion that there was a nest of snakes not more than a mile and a half from town. If he could manage to get bit by a snake he would have to have whisky as an antidote and the doctor would make out the prescription. The man with a thirst was overjoyed and started off to the snake cave. An hour and a half later he returned, tired, dusty and disconsolate.

"Well, did you do as I told you?" inquired the doctor.

"My dear sir," replied the man with the thirst, "I called on the snakes, but discovered that every one of them had their bites engaged for six months ahead. I quit."

Inopportune Question

Chicago Evening Post: "Will you marry me," he asked.

She looked at him reproachfully.

"Here am I, going away for the summer," she said, "going to the seashore and the mountains, and you would ask me to tie myself up at the beginning. I shall be glad to become engaged to you upon my return, but—did you ever see an engaged girl at a summer resort with her fiance back in the city? You shouldn't ask too great a sacrifice."



CHINESE COBBLER AT WORK.