

Fight of Ocean and River in Hangchow Bay



CHINESE FISHERMAN AND HIS CORMORANTS.

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HAINING, Chekiang, Jan. 23.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have seen the greatest wonder of China. I might almost say the greatest wonder of the world.

It is the fight between the waters of the ocean and those of the land which takes place here at every tide, when the mighty Pacific, rearing its snow white head to a height of many feet, comes galloping up the Bay of Hangchow in a vain attempt to conquer the Tsingtang river, which there meets it and is lost in its waters.

I saw the struggle standing on the sea wall which the Chinese have here built to keep back the ocean. This wall is as high as a three-story house. It is built of granite, the stones in places being bound together with iron, and it runs from here all the way along the coast to the mouth of the Yangtse Kiang. It is thirty feet high and more than one hundred miles long, and it is only one of the mighty creations of the Chinese in their struggle with nature.

China Versus Holland.

We make much of the fight of Holland with the waves. The fight of the Chinese is far more wonderful. You could drop Holland amongst the vast regions of the lower Yangtse valley and you would have to hunt to find it. This whole country is a system of dykes and canals. I traveled up the Yangtse river for 1,000 miles and found enormous embankments everywhere along its course. I walked on the banks of waterways forty feet above the lands, the tops of such embankments forming the roads and paths of the country. The great silk district about Haining is of a similar nature. Every farm lies below the level of the canal, and everywhere the people are dredging out the waterways and building up walls. The canals are crossed by hundreds of bridges, some of enormous size and of great beauty, and all representing a vast amount of money and work.

Take, for instance, this huge wall of Haining on which I am standing. At its foot are two terraces about twenty feet wide, held back by piles filled in with stones. Above these terraces the wall rises straight up about fifteen feet. It is regularly built, being made of blocks of stone from a foot to eighteen inches thick, one piled upon another as in building a house. Upon the terraces, which are high out of the water, is a long line of great junks filled with cargo for Haining. They have come in when the tide was high, and by its recession have been laid upon this great shelf. I have crawled down upon the terraces and I sit below the ships as I write these notes. They are at least fifteen feet back from the water, and their tall masts tower high above the top of the wall. They are enormous vessels which came here by sea from other ports. Their mighty sails are flapping in the breeze, and the great fish-like eyes, each as big around as a dinner plate, look down upon me as I work. The ships are anchored to the wall by cables of twisted bamboo as big around as your arm, and beyond and back of them I can see the pagodas and other buildings of Haining, with the blue mountains rising behind them.

To Keep Old Neptune Back.

Stand beside me and let your eye follow the wall. Notice how it winds along with the sinuous curves of a snake, the stones as closely laid as though they were dovetailed. Those curves lessen the force of the mighty bore and aid in keeping the ocean out of the land.

Notice that great fascine or fortification of rushes and twigs which extends far out from the wall in the shape of a bow. It is twenty feet high and sixty feet in diameter and is made of sticks filled in with mud, the ends of the sticks facing outward. That wall is to protect these ships from the daily inroad of the Pacific, which might otherwise dash them to pieces against the stones.

Now look down at the bay. We are approaching low tide and the water is still flowing out. The goddess of the Tsingtang is supreme. The bay is filled with the silt brought down by it from the mountains. It is silty and muddy, a great sheet of bright yellow ten miles in width bordered at each end with navy blue mountains. The sky is bright blue and filled with waves of fleecy clouds just above me. Far out be-

yond the yellow I can see the white caps on the Pacific, the realm of old Neptune, but as yet there is no sign of his invasion of the land.

I climb to the top of the wall, first having my guide draw my camera up with a string, and sit down and wait for the coming invasion. I am on a wide dyke shaded by long lines of willows, with the Hangchow bay and the ocean in front of me and behind and below me, a mighty garden spotted with clumps of green trees and covered with a crazy quilt of luxuriant crops. There are patches of pink peach orchards just bursting forth into bloom, gray thickets of mulberry trees and clumps of feathery bamboos, out of which peep the thatched roofs of farm houses. There are people wearing blue gowns and gray hats at work in the fields, lazy buffaloes dragging the plows through the furrows, and in the willows above me I hear the singing of birds. It is an ideal country scene, as peaceful and quiet as that of any part of the world, and I almost doze off as I look.

Battle of the Waters.

But what is that sound in the distance? It makes me think of a railroad train at great speed, but far off. It slowly deepens and I look out to sea. It is the mighty Pacific gathering itself together for the great bore at Hangchow. With my glass I can see a faint line of white at the foot of blue islands about ten miles away. It is now but a streak of silver cutting the sea. As I watch it it broadens and lengthens. The sound increases. See! There is a low wall of foam way out there in the water. There are great boats behind it which are floating in on the tide, and ships in front which it must swallow up as it comes onward. Now it is nearer and higher. With the naked eye I can see it throwing its foam into the air. The wall seems to be rolling over and over, while the bay at my feet is as still as a mill pond. Now the flood has caught the ships. They ride with it. They sway this way and that, apparently on their beam ends. Now they are lost and a little later on I see them rising and falling with the swell behind it.

Now the wall of water is extending far out in the bay. It is dashing itself against the embankment some miles further up and it is rolling, seething, foaming, roaring toward me. This wall is graver than that which engulfed Pharaoh's army. It makes me think of Niagara and the thunder of its oncoming current is almost as great. It comes closer and closer, until at last it dashes almost to my feet and goes roaring onward. It has caught the great junks on the terrace, swayed their masts to and fro, and, passing, has left them floating, for the bay is now filled and the terraces hidden. How the water seethes and boils! There are a myriad whirlpools in the bay. The ships are pulling at the great bamboo cables with which they are tied to the shore, and the whole for a moment is like the rapids below Niagara falls.

A moment later and the contest is over. The Pacific has crowded the river far back. It has filled the bay and the tide is felt far into the interior. The dykes and the walls, however, have protected the farms and the people are working in the fields just as peacefully as before the great "White Terror" came galloping in.

On the Grand Canal.

I have been traveling for some days upon the Grand canal, going off now and then into the smaller canals which cover this part of China like a net. The Grand canal is a wonderful waterway. It is longer than from New York to Cleveland and it passes through a region which contains more people than the whole United States. I saw it first at Tse, Tsin, which city it taps on its way north to Peking. I have traveled on it near Peking and also seen it at Chinkiang, where it crosses the Yangtse, and am now near its lower end, where it terminates at the great city of Hangchow.

Traveling upon it you pass walled towns at every few hours and now and then come to walled cities so large that you are half a day in getting through them. For hundreds of miles there are no locks and north of the Yangtse the water is carried over the country on great stone embankments, twenty or more feet high, the stream within the embankments being several hundred feet wide. The smaller canals have

floodgates and locks leading into the Grand canal, and in some places these are managed by soldiers. It is said a river was once conducted into it at a place above the Yangtse Kiang and that it took 300,000 men seven months to turn the waters of that stream. A great part of the Grand canal is in bad repair, but south of the Yangtse it is a mighty trade route, filled with all kinds of vessels.

Land of Many Bridges.

The labor upon the canal has been enormous and a vast amount of work is being done upon it today. At every few miles stone bridges have been built across it and many of these bridges have wide stone arches high enough for the boats to pass through. From the boat these arches are exceedingly picturesque. They form a frame for the long waterway covered with boats of all kinds. I counted thirty bridges in sight at one time and this not including the little stone bridges which cross the side canals at every few hundred feet.

The banks of all the canals have footpaths, worn smooth by the tread of thousands of bare feet. Many of the boats are hauled along by trekers, men, women and children, who are harnessed up like horses and who pull the boats onward by ropes attached to the masts. The women work as hard as the men, a thrifty boatman having several wives, each extra wife being an extra slave to the husband.

All the canals are filled with fish and there are fishermen everywhere. There are fish traps built at intervals across the waterway, through which your boat goes with a scraping, grating sound. There are wicker fences, so fixed into the bed of the canal that they will bend down when the boat presses against them. They are meant to stop the fish from coming down or up stream and to turn them into the sinuous pens of bamboo at the sides, where once in they cannot get out. Such pens are frequently near great stone bridges.

There are also fishermen using hooks and lines and fishing parties with nets and also many men fishing with spears. The fishermen sit along in a canoe, upon the sides of which sit from twenty to thirty birds, which look much like ducks. They are on the rim of the boat, fastened there by strings tied to their legs. At a word from their master they will dive down for fish and bring them up in their mouths. Each cormorant has a ring about its neck which prevents it from swallowing the fish it catches. The



WALL AND SHIPS AT HAINUNG—THE WALL IS ONE HUNDRED MILES LONG AND KEEPS BACK THE SEA.

Fisherman sits in the stern of the boat and paddles it along.

Scenes in Soochow.

One of the most important cities on the Grand canal is Soochow. It is bigger than St. Louis and was founded about 500 B. C. It is the capital of Kinagsu province and is in the heart of a district as thickly populated perhaps as any part of China. It is a very rich city and a great manufacturing center. It makes silks, linens, cot-

tons and all sorts of things of iron, ivory and glass. In the new China it will be one of the great cities of the empire and one of the chief railroad centers. Railroads have already been surveyed to connect it with Shanghai, and before many years it will be known all over the world. It is only five years now since it was opened to foreign trade. This was at the close of the Chinese-Japanese war. At present

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