

China a Year After the Siege in Peking¹

By Arthur H. Smith

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THE approach of the summer solstice reminds us that a year ago the siege in Peking was just beginning. The Taku forts were being filled with men, the Peiho was being mined, and the Admirals of the allied fleet, which was riding at anchor ten miles outside the bar, saw that unless something was done all communication between themselves and their Legations in Peking, as well as with all foreigners in Tientsin, not to speak of other parts of China, would be cut off. They determined to demand the surrender of the forts, which was no doubt an "act of war" (certainly not one of peace), but a necessary one under the unexampled circumstances into which the world had allowed itself all unconsciously to drift. The Tsungli-Yamên told the Ministers to quit Peking within four and twenty hours, and had it not been for the murder of Baron von Ketteler, who somewhat rashly went to the Yamên alone on the morning of June 20, and who was shot by a Manchu military official in full dress, probably no foreigner in Peking would have escaped. At 4 P.M., with very un-Oriental punctuality, firing began all around the Legations, and the siege was begun!

After more than ten months of military occupation and of endless conferences of a diplomatic sort, we see the beginning of a new order of things. The troops have been gradually pulling out, and the great Graf von Waldersee himself, specially promoted and imported for the occasion, has gladly shaken off the copious North China dust from his shoes and left for Japan. A difficult and a thankless task his must have been, and he is supposed to have performed it with "tact," which constitutes so large a part of the needs of those who have to deal with such complex and irreconcilable interests. How many troops are to be left in Tientsin, Shanhaikuan, Taku, etc., seems not to be known to the public, but the number is not very large, and is not the essential thing. The whole crux of the situa-

tion in China is the question by what means the transition from the heterogeneous polyglot rule of all nations over a part of this province is to be replaced by a trustworthy Chinese rule. For ten months this part of China has practically been embarked upon a foreign fleet tossing about in a stormy sea. Now the time has arrived when the passengers and crew must be transferred back to the old unseaworthy Chinese junks in which they were before. The gangways are all down, the water is full of small sampans waiting to take men and cargo, but there is so much of a swell that the exchange is not an easy one to effect, and some will probably get drowned.

To abandon marine allegories and come to fact, there are indications that the situation is fully comprehended by the Chinese, who have adapted themselves to it with their usual rapidity and skill. An edict—this time of the "sure enough" variety—recently appeared in the name of the Emperor, naming the 19th of the seventh moon (September 1) as the day on which a start is to be made for the capital. The age and the state of health of his "mother" make it imperative to accommodate the movement to her necessities, so that the probability is that the first halt may be in Honan, where the miseries of the famine in Shensi may be escaped and the appearance of a reoccupation of Peking kept up. That the Emperor should return alone, though much desired by foreigners and by the most patriotic Chinese, seems not to have been suggested, and is at least not hinted at in the edict. This means, the Occidental reader will do well to bear in mind, that the relation of the Empress Dowager to the Chinese Government—a relation of essential identity—is exactly what it was when one year ago she gave the order to fire upon the Legations. It is not known that the question of her right to rule the Empire which she has brought to the verge of ruin and disruption has been before the Powers in any definite form. There has been no effort to arrange to

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have the Emperor put back on his throne, from which he was driven in September, 1898, and it may be that this is regarded as an irrelevant detail.

The whole proceedings of the negotiations in Peking, happily in detail still enigmatical to the public, so far as they are known may apparently be summed up in the one dissyllable discord. This does not mean that there is not unanimity, but that the results arrived at are the composition of varied forces each of which could not be ignored, and which could in no way be harmonized. One of the most felicitous cartoons of the many which during the past months have exhibited the caricaturist skill of the world was one which represented all the Powers pulling on a rope attached to the tongue of the Great Chinese Bell. As the parties exerting their strength surrounded the bell on all sides, there was no voice nor sound, owing to the mutual extinction of their efforts at motion.

The impartial spectator will naturally inquire, since the Empress Dowager tried to kill all the foreigners in the Empire a year ago for supposed wrongs received, and because of a feminine fury, what is to prevent a repetition of the same plan? To this it may be answered that though the Empress Dowager is in no way modified, but, on the contrary, far more exasperated than before by additional wrongs and much personal suffering, there are now some Legation Guards, and walls (with semi-concealed loopholes) all about the Legation area; there are foreign troops at various points mentioned; there have been several persons already executed, at least ten and perhaps fifteen, and others banished, etc.; there is (to be) a monument to Baron von Ketteler on the spot where he was killed; and, best of all, there is to be a great Chinese debt, which will so unify the interests of China with those of the Powers that the Chinese will hasten to tax themselves with joy, knowing that this is the only way to pay the indemnities, and if these are not paid there will be more trouble, more claims, and still more indemnities.

Of anything like regenerating influences tending to remove the intolerable ills of Chinese (and Manchu) rule in the past there is not a hint. The financial problem has been the key of the situation, and

when that is mechanically adjusted the troops can go, while China on her part willingly agrees to anything rather than prolong the occupation, of which the allies are only less weary than she, and it then becomes easy to notify the Chinese generally that the invading barbarian has at last been driven (or persuaded) out.

But we have omitted one important condition of peace, which is, the Imperial edicts to be published all over China, reciting the punishments inflicted, forbidding membership in any anti-foreign society under pain of death, and recognizing the responsibility of provincial officials for outrages occurring in their districts, under penalty of removal from office. Here is something practical and of the utmost importance. After the murder of Mr. Margary in 1875, the universal publication of an Imperial edict in a relatively permanent form all over China proved of the greatest value. But we are assured on excellent authority that down to the present time nothing whatever has been done about this vital matter, every word and phrase of which should be scrutinized with the utmost care, and its dissemination provided for and watched. Of all the twelve peace conditions to which the Chinese were obliged to assent, this alone contains the moral element through which only the Chinese people are likely to be influenced. The prohibition of examinations in cities where foreigners have been murdered, reckoned as a masterpiece of diplomacy by some, and by others as only an ingenious contrivance still further to embitter the literati against foreigners, may easily and not improbably be neutralized completely by being extended by the Chinese Government to all China, by which its "face" would be saved and the burden equalized. It is proposed to exempt the province of Kwangtung from the operation of such a rule, if adopted, since the results of the examinations there are connected with a lottery which brings the Government more than a million taels per annum. This single instance of the proviso for punishing guilty cities by curtailing their chances for securing scholarships, and hence official promotion, well illustrates the inherent difficulty of deciding what is best, and the facility with which unforeseen consequences emerge.

Within the past fortnight a fire occurred in the Forbidden City of Peking, by which the Wu Ying Tien, containing a throne-hall and many state records, archives, etc., was destroyed. The same thing occurred not many years ago with a previous building, and whether the fire was accidental (by lightning) or incendiary is disputed. This occurrence followed but a few days after the publication of an edict of so singular a nature as to surprise many even of those who are accustomed to Chinese eccentricities. The substance of it was that, since the administration of the Six Boards (by which the Empire is governed) had become overlaid with traditions and abuses which were incorporated in precedents so complicated as to be comprehensible only to experts, it was ordered that a large part of the records of the dynasty be destroyed, so as to begin again upon a new and clear basis. This seemed simple and hopeful, but fuller information from Chinese sources indicates that it is but a single act in a complicated drama. The Emperor wants reform, as he did in 1898, when he was deposed. Orders have been sent to the prominent officials throughout the Empire with requests for suggestions as to the reforms which appear most desirable. But the Emperor, it is said, is not even allowed to see these important memorials, which are decided upon by the Empress Dowager alone, in connection with an influential clique of three reactionary men.

The indications that reform of some sort is everywhere demanded are so clear that the ultra-conservatives must now make it their cry, too, and the first step is to save the face of China once more by the destruction of those records which were not already obliterated in the sack of Peking—some of them incriminating the Government—after which the spurious anti-reform reformers will have it all their own way. An official at Singanfu writes to a friend in Nanking gloomily predicting that from the indications at that capital the reactionaries, who are in full power, just as they have been, are merely biding their time, and that “the moment peace negotiations are completed and a treaty of peace signed and ratified, the audacity of the reactionaries will have no limit, and the country will be covered with mountains of corpses, and rivers of blood will deluge the Empire.”

This dismal prognosis, it is worth noting, is embodied in a document in which the allusions are veiled for greater security by adopting the names of historical characters in the Han dynasty who lived at various dates from B.C. 73 to A.D. 221, the meaning being intelligible to scholars only.

That there is great uncertainty in what direction the pent-up stream of lava will flow is true, as the constant discussion of the matter in the native press of Shanghai (which is practically unfettered in its expression) abundantly shows. But there is much more reason to suppose that there will be implicit rather than explicit, covert rather than overt, neutralizing of the lessons of the past year on the part of whoever holds the practical control of the Chinese Government in the disturbed provinces.

Attention has been repeatedly called in these articles to one of the most portentous indications of the situation—that the managers of the Roman Catholic missions, and especially their native membership, as a whole display a persistent determination to play the Shylock both as to money indemnity and the punishment of their enemies, which is certain to result in a harvest of hate and reprisals in the not distant future. It would serve no useful purpose to specify instances, but they are to be found in every one of the provinces where the attacks have been most bitter, and excite the most intense opposition on the part of officials and people alike. This is so evident and so distinctly an element in the prospective situation that one of the officials in the United States Legation (whose name I do not mention only because I have not asked permission to do so) has expressed the opinion to one of our American Board workers that while foreign life will be safer than heretofore, that of the Christians will be much less secure, and he therefore recommends the adoption of the plan of arming the converts, and the fortification of their villages, as the Catholics have done, by which means alone tens of thousands of Chinese lives must have been saved last year, and scores of Europeans kept from massacre. Order may indeed be restored in Chili and elsewhere, so that things will not come to such extremities as this, but the judicious, after the experiences of 1900,

refuse to prophesy, and merely point out the elements of uncertainty.

That there is the danger mentioned is strikingly exhibited by the experience of a band of Belgian priests living in the remote post of Ningtiaoliang, on the southern border of the Mongolian desert, in the country of the Ordos tribes, about half way between Yülinfu, in the extreme north of Shensi, and Ninghsiafu, in Kansu. It was known last autumn that this place had been holding out against attacks for some months, and not long since word was received in Peking that in the month of April fifteen Belgian priests, together with all their male converts, had been massacred at this station in the month of April. This was denied by Li-Hung-Chang, who subsequently admitted that "two" might have been killed, but that it had no connection with other events elsewhere, although this is the region where the "exiled" Prince Tuan was last heard of, and where the soldiers of General Tung-Fuhsiang, the principal actor in the attacks of last year upon the Legations, are now reported to be, by whose agency this atrocity is said to have been committed. Until this is confirmed, it is well not to lay stress upon it as an example.

It should have been mentioned, in connection with the reform measures referred to above, that while the number of edicts issued with regard to this subject in its various ramifications is large, and the discussion not infrequently minute and apparently thorough, they are not worth critical examination, because no one is able to determine what underlies the apparent suggestions, and because there are frequently secret instructions accompanying the edicts which materially modify their complexion. Thus, in a decree regarding the reformation of the Han-Lin Academy, the "odes and other useless things" are denounced, and are to be replaced by "ancient and modern books on government and the official histories of the province of Chili, while other subjects, such as treaties, international law, astronomy, science, and the like, will be placed in the catalogue of elective studies." Special colleges will be recommended for these subjects where the students will be examined and where discussions will take place. Note the following significant hint: "Those of them whose dis-

cussions are in strict accord with truth will be rewarded by promotion, while those whose discussions are perverse and injurious will be punished."

Chang-Chihtung, the Governor-General of the two Hu provinces, is said not to have sent on his reform memorial for the reason that *reform was to be postponed until the actual return of the Court to Peking*, but the Chinese press alleges that his Excellency has received a secret telegram informing him that reforms should be "along the lines of ancient Chinese law, and no importance should be attached to Western learning." It is easy to see what kind of "reform" that would be.

Li-Hung-Chang is said to be thoroughly committed to the Empress Dowager, to whom, like all other officials, he owes his position, but he recommends a long list of good men for important posts, who are ordered to present themselves for audience. On the other hand, a bitter foreign-hater has just been gazetted to the provincial judgeship of Chekiang, at Hangchow, where he may be able to do vast mischief. *Per contra*, the late Taotai of T'ung-chou, Shennenghu, who last year did all he could for the foreigners in his city, and was himself looted and driven out as a "third-class devil," is now assigned a new position, which he richly merits. Thus the phenomena are contradictory and obscure in meaning. The "Mixed Commission" at Paotingfu, which has so long wrestled with the difficult problem of governing the teeming population under its jurisdiction, has recently ceased its useful functions, greatly to the regret of the people, who begged the German commander to keep his troops there for some time longer, all the officers being glad to leave the perplexities and anomalies of such a task. The same transfer from foreign to Chinese rule is taking place in Peking, but the American Legation Guard, though few in numbers, are ordered to keep fast hold on the south gate of the Forbidden City until the Court returns to take it over, though there have been numerous other contingents quite ready to relieve it. It is morally certain that the palace eunuchs, always hard to restrain and rapacious as unfed hawks, have made way with much of the treasures of the palaces, the loss of which will be laid to the foreigners.

The Tientsin Provisional Government may be continued for some months longer, as its reforms are of so important a nature that it is essential to see them carried far enough to prevent their being neutralized by the Chinese. In place of the unspeakable filth and the unsightly kennels along the river-front, there now runs a broad boulevard, well paved and lighted, from the foreign settlements to the junction of the Peiho and the Grand Canal, and to the Iron Bridge opposite the Governor-General's Yamén. This is to be continued entirely around the city, the wall of which has been taken down, to be replaced by a broad esplanade, and probably equipped with an electric belt line. The startling nature of this improvement is enough to take away the breath of the "oldest inhabitant," but it is far from being all. The occupiers of shanties leaning against the late city wall have been given better sites elsewhere, the stagnant ponds have been filled up, lots marked out, while the removal of the city wall makes all places far more accessible than before, and will add immensely to the business value of property. But for the Boxers, these changes might have required half a millennium to come to the state which they have reached within the year since the Taku forts were taken. The Provisional Government has secured permission to go on with the previously planned, but always postponed, river improvement, cutting through letter S, "everlasting bends," and the like, so that there is a fair prospect that steamers may once more come to the "bund" (Tientsin) instead of to Tonghu only, and trade revive. The Government has also grappled with the well-organized river pirates, whom the Chinese authorities could or would not break up, and numbers have been caught and beheaded, to the great advantage of the traffic and to the delight of the mercantile population, especially the helpless Chinese. Before the end of the year it is hoped that these reforms may all be accomplished and such an impulse given that the Chinese Government may at last attack the Taku bar, which has been such a vexation to navigation. A good bridge across the Peiho is another projected improvement. The "T. P. G." has shown that there is plenty of revenue

money if it is only used where it will do good, instead of filling the coffers of Chinese supernumeraries.

The Rev. Timothy Richard, whose visit to Peking at the request of the Governor of Shansi and the Chinese Peace Commissioners was mentioned in a former article, has now returned to Shanghai, after having drawn up a scheme for the settlement of the Protestant cases in that province which is so conspicuously fair and just (and so utterly in contrast to the Roman Catholic demands) that the Chinese press comments upon it with uniform approbation. In consideration of the fact that the people were acting under orders in their riots of last year, he suggests that one Boxer leader in each district be punished as a warning; that the losses of converts must be provided for and provision made for widows and orphans; that the province raise half a million taels, one-tenth to be paid each year, for the establishment of schools to enlighten the people of Shansi, thus avoiding delusions in the future—one educated foreigner and one educated Chinese to manage the business; monumental stones to be erected wherever converts were killed; the officials, gentry, scholars, and people to receive courteously missionaries whenever again sent, and apologize for the past; equal treatment of converts and non-converts in everything; and lists to be kept of the names of rioters, to be punished if they again offend. These principles have been agreed to by the representatives of the Protestant societies working in Shansi—the China Inland Mission, the American Board, the English Baptist, the Gospel Mission, and an independent organization. These suggestions were submitted to Li-Hung-Chang, who is said to have been exceedingly pleased with the moderation of the demands, exclaiming that never yet had there been in China such an enlightened and moderate gentleman as Dr. Richard had shown himself to be, and that if these suggestions were put into effect there would be no more missionary troubles in the Empire. Dr. Richard's long residence in Shansi—from 1876 to 1886—his devotion and tact in distributing famine relief at the beginning of that period, his cordial relations with officials from the Governor down, and his wide reputation as the best-known

and most representative Protestant missionary in China, combine to give his recommendations great weight.

The incident is of capital importance, not merely for what may come of it directly or indirectly, though this is much, but for the irrefragable evidence of the esteem in which those missionaries are held whose record speaks for them. As a direct consequence of the invitation to Dr. Richard to go to Shansi, although he was unable to accept for himself, a party of nine is just leaving, under Chinese official escort, including Dr. Edwards, of Shouyang, Dr. Atwood (American Board), of Fenchoufu, Messrs. Hoste, Orr-Ewing, Tjader, and Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, and Mr. Duncan and Dr. Creasy Smith (English Bishop), of Singanfu, the latter, however, not expecting to enter the province of Shensi as yet. The journey is not without peril, and the outcome will be watched with the greatest interest in many lands.

The "Christian Herald" relief fund, intended for Shansi, has, after much correspondence and not a little uncertainty what to do with it, been apportioned among four provinces—Shansi, 10,000 taels, to be distributed by Dr. Edwards; Shensi, the same, managed by Mr. Duncan, either through friendly officials, native Christians, or both; Shantung, 5,000 taels, and Chili, 3,000 taels, to be used as required. It will be of service in piecing out the amounts needed to relieve the worst distress of Christians who have not yet received any indemnity, as we hope all may eventually. Those in Shantung are now beginning to get theirs, thanks to Governor Yuan, who to Protestants especially is most friendly.

Dr. Griffith John has recently published an interesting account of an extended visit with a companion to Hunan, which was formerly the most bitterly hostile in all China, but which he says is now at last really "open." Their reception, even in the cities where rioting occurred last year, was most cordial both by people and by officials.

There are now at least fifteen missionaries representing six societies in this fine province, and more will follow when the peace conditions have gone into effect. Intellectually and physically the people are among the finest in China, and will

prove friendly to foreigners when relations have become once thoroughly established.

Representatives of nine of the important missionary societies in China have recently issued, both in English and in Chinese, a "Statement" in regard to the connection between missionaries and the present crisis. It is of the nature of an explanation, and incidentally a defense, and has attracted favorable comment from the leading foreign journals of Shanghai for its conspicuous fairness and moderation of language. A paragraph from an article in the "North China Daily News" dealing with it should be quoted: "The charge that missionaries have manifested an improper desire to see vengeance done on the perpetrators of last year's outrages is, except in possible isolated cases, as unfounded as Mark Twain's ignorant charges against Dr. Ament and his colleagues in Peking and its vicinity. Men who have examined the whole question with an honest desire to arrive at the truth without prejudice or partiality allow that the behavior of the missionaries as a body has not only been above reproach, but worthy of praise and gratitude. They have been anxious, as we have all been anxious, to see outrages such as those of last year made impossible in the future, and as long as human nature is what it is, men must be deterred from crime by the conviction that it will be followed by punishment; and not to have punished, and punished severely, the culprits of last year would have been to invite a repetition of their crimes."

This reminds us of the welcome intelligence received not long ago that Minister Conger will soon be on his way out again. It is simply a fact that at the present time there is no other man who can take his place, or who ought to take it. Like all the other Ministers, he did not foresee the coming cyclone in China, but when it came he proved a tower of strength, not to Americans only, but to the common defense—a service ill requited by the theory prevalent at Washington that because his insight was so much greater and more accurate than that of any one in Washington, his "mind was affected"! As President Lincoln desired more Generals who drank the "whisky" to which General Grant was alleged to be addicted, so the United States Legations

abroad would do well to lay in a stock of Ministers who have the common sense and the manliness of Mr. Conger. It is incidentally a gratification to many whose sense of justice has been outraged by the captious criticisms of those with neither knowledge nor candor to comprehend existing conditions to see that Mr. Conger has not hesitated to take the responsibility for his own advice consistently given to American citizens acting in times of storm and stress. He has comprehensively replied to all the current criticism by the remark: "I am prepared to justify the conduct of the missionaries before the siege, during the siege, and after the siege." It is well for the friends of those moral reforms without which the regeneration of this Empire is utterly impossible

to bear in mind that existing conditions do not alter our duty to China, but only modify present action. If anything is certain, it is that there is to be in some form a new China. For that we should watch, and perhaps wait, but not idly nor as those without hope. All mission methods should be re-examined, as ships are overhauled in the dry-docks, but always with reference to a new and a longer voyage than the last. China is a constant and an inextinguishable factor in the history of the twentieth century, and in and for China there is a great work to be done, and there are many in all parts of the earth who can at least give assistance with their sympathies and their prayers, never more needed nor more sure to be helpful than now.

The Field Matron's Mission

By Annie Beecher Scoville

"Take pity on my women. . . . Give a future to my women."—*Sitting Bull*.

EVERY reformer who is brought face to face with the results of his own enthusiasm at some time in his career echoes Browning's

'Tis dangerous work to meddle with souls,
And trouble enough to save one's own.

If you are an Indian worker, such a revolution of feeling comes on some visit to a big reservation, when, after a hundred weary miles of sun-baked plains, you reach the green valley of the camp, and find its verdure mostly sage, its waters alkaline, and the old Indian life with its tepees and long-haired horsemen more comely than the blighted grain, faded calicoes, and squalid cabins that stand for civilization and your work. The big, bare Government school—emblem of progress—is as lonely and out of place as the sewing-machine standing beside an Indian tent, and even the brown-faced school-children in whom once you trusted as the hope of the Indian future are only uniform packages of humanity done up in blue calico, and your heart goes out to the old people, who have borne the brunt and burden of life and are now passed carelessly by. This is especially true if your visit falls early in September, and you see the people bringing their children to school.

"See," says one father, "they are all dead but this, and he is a poor, miserable little thing; surely we may keep him longer."

But the law is that every child must be given up when it is six years old, so the frightened baby goes with a teacher, and the parents, who live forty miles away, pitch their camp where they may watch from a distance the big building that has swallowed up their boy.

"Oh, Winona," calls some one at our door before we are up, "I forgot to tell the little girl to get up when the big bell rings. Go quickly and ask them not to whip her this once."

Here is an old grandmother with a grievance. "Did not my mother and her mother, ay, as long as there have been Indians, did they not teach their daughters to speak in low tones, and now these white women punish them because they will not speak loud. Surely it is shameful!"

When darkness falls and a group of frightened little ones huddle together and scream with terror at your unknown tongue, you do not stop to consider that this is the first step in the English education enforced by Government, but hurry for an interpreter. Late into the night you hear the long, wailing cries of some