

THE CELESTIAL CAPITAL

A Graphic Description of Pekin's Streets and Buildings.

The city of Pekin is by no means the least remarkable of the sights of China. It is in every respect a contrast to the other capitals of the world. Pekin comprises in reality three distinct townships. The first, known as the Chinese city, lies to the south, while adjoining it is the larger Tartar city, which encloses the smaller Imperial, or "Purple Forbidden City," containing the palaces and royal demesne. Though only elevated to the position of Celestial capital in 1421, Pekin possesses a history which dates from over a thousand years back, and its antiquity is evident from its faded grandeur and decreased population.

It is impossible in the space allotted here to enter into all the details of the history of Pekin, and so imperfect are its records that such an account would be impossible, with any degree of exactness. When and by whom the city was founded is a mystery. Pekin is a very ancient city. Centuries before the Christian era it was the capital of the kingdom of Yen, but when this kingdom was overthrown by the Tsin dynasty in 222 B. C., the seat of government was removed elsewhere. About 938 A. D. it again became the capital of the Kitan dynasty. In 1215 it was captured by Genghis Khan and in 1264 became the residence of Kublai Khan. The native emperors, however, who succeeded the Mongol dynasty, removed the court to Nankin, but the third emperor of the Ming dynasty in 1421 once more made Pekin the imperial residence. The city was repeatedly pillaged; its population slaughtered, its defenses razed, and its sacred temples defiled. Of all the cities of China none appear to have been the scene of so many successes and misfortunes.

The Tartar city is planned on a more imposing scale than the Chinese, but its many fine buildings and gorgeous temples have mostly fallen into a state of ruin. Among the most noteworthy buildings in this enclosure is the Tsungli Yamen, or foreign office, established after the ratification of the treaty of Tien-Tsin in 1861—a one-storied building resembling a temple rather than a government office in appearance. In the southeast corner of the Tartar city are the foreign legations, clustered together, each surrounded by its wall, where reside the ministers accredited to the court of Pekin by the powers.

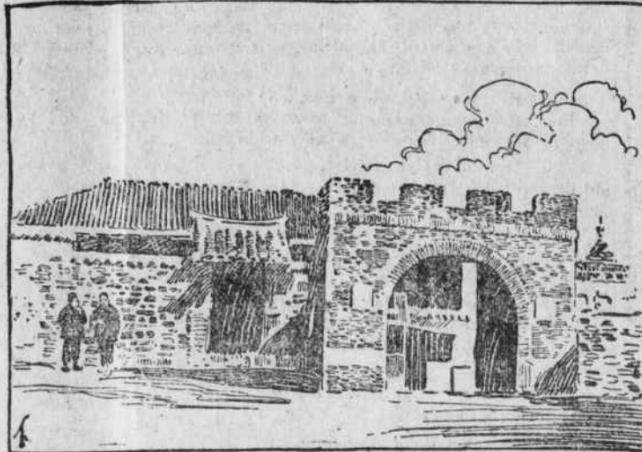
The Imperial city, lying in the center of that above described is regarded by the Chinese as sacred ground on which none but the elect may tread. This holy of holies is of considerable extent. It is strongly enclosed, the walls having a circumference of six miles, and contains a series of palaces and imperial temples and buildings, most of which have not been explored

by Europeans. Indeed, except on the few occasions when the emperor has granted an audience to the foreign ministers in Pekin, the "Purple Forbidden City" has never been trodden by "barbarian" feet.

The only detailed description of the "Forbidden City" is given by Dr. S. Wells Williams in his "Middle Kingdom." He says that in the great tower above the south gate of the enclosure is a huge gong, which is struck whenever the emperor passes through. Here the imperial ruler receives his troops when they return in triumph, and here he confers gifts upon vassal potentates and viceroys. Passing through this gate one finds himself in a large court, where a small stream is spanned by five marble bridges. These bridges cross over into a second court, which is paved with marble and flanked by pillared corridors and porticos. At the head of this court is a superb marble structure, known as the Gate of Extensive Peace, 110 feet high. It is a sort of balcony where the emperor on New Year's day and other festive occasions receives the homage of his courtiers.

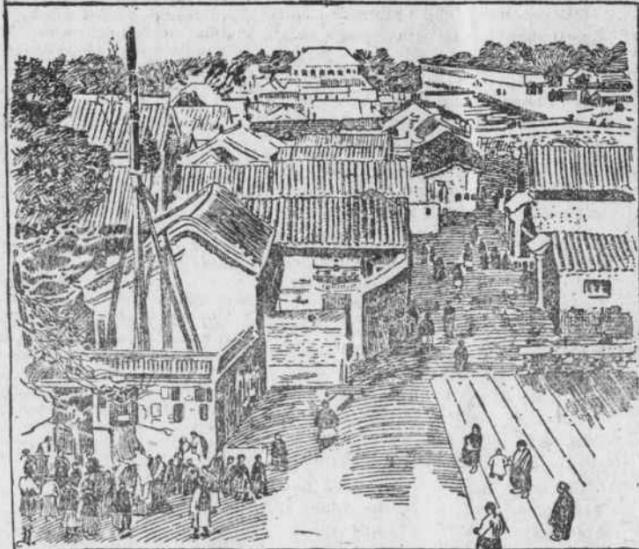
Ascending a stairway and passing another gate, one reaches the Tranquil Palace of Heaven, in which is the imperial council chamber, and wherein candidates for office are presented to the sovereign. This is the richest,

ace of Earth's Repose, which accommodates the imperial harem, superintended by the empress. Between this palace and the north wall of the For-



ENTRANCE TO THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

bidden City are the gardens appropriated for the use of the inmates of harems—the wives of the emperor, the eunuchs, and other attendants. These



STREET IN THE TARTAR CITY.

loftiest and most magnificent of all the palaces. In the court beneath its walls is a small tower of gilt copper adorned with a great number of statues. Beyond this building is the Pal-

gards are adorned with pavilions, temples, and beautiful groves of trees, interspersed with canals, fountains, and other ornamental artifices.

The walled imperial precinct is a veritable city of the Arabian Nights, and its truthful annals might compose many a volume of fascinating and romantic interest. It is surrounded by a deep moat, and the eastern part of it contains, among other buildings, the offices of the cabinet and the treasury. North of these offices is the so-called Hall of Intense Thought, where periodical sacrifices are made to Confucius and other sages, and near by is the Hall of the Literary Abyss—in other words, the library—which publishes from time to time a catalogue of the best Chinese literature up to date. At the north end of the eastern division are numerous palaces and buildings occupied by princes of the blood royal and their relatives and families. In this same quarter is a small temple to

which the emperor comes at regular intervals to perform devotions before the tablets of his ancestors.

There are upwards of 200 palaces in the two inclosures of the Forbidden City and the Imperial City. Much gorgeousness is assembled within a small area, but not even the sacred dwelling of the emperor himself has modern plumbing, and the conveniences deemed essential to comfort in Oriental countries are conspicuously absent in the royal domiciles and other build-



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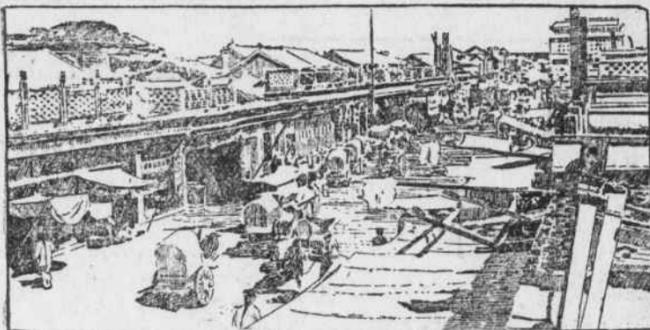
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A STREET IN THE CITY PROPER.

BAD INTENT DISPROVED.

Expert Shooting by a Cowboy Changes a Charge.

"Jack" Vance, a cowboy from the ranch of the Butte Creek Cattle company, was on trial at Alliance, Neb., on a charge of shooting at a brakeman on the Burlington railway with intent to kill him. He had received his pay a few days before and was engaged at the time of shooting in the picturesque pastime of painting the country red. Vance vehemently denied any intent to perforate the brakeman. He told the court that, while it was true that he did take out his revolver and shoot after the brakeman had pushed him off the train, he was merely giving a pre-arranged signal. He and a friend had been down the road a few miles and wanted to ride back to the nearest station to the ranch. Realizing that if they were found by any of the train crew they would be put off, they had arranged that if anyone was put off the train he should notify his partner by firing his revolver at once. The brakeman, with visions of what he

firmly believed was a narrow escape from death, shook his head, and the judge looked unbelieving. Vance's cowboy friend corroborated the story but seeing that his tale failed to receive credence, the defendant asked the court to please step outside. The judge asked what for. "I'll prove my innocence, your honor," Vance said. The court was curious and went outside, so did the sheriff, lawyers, and spectators. Vance pulled out his revolver, and, holding a postage stamp between the fingers of his left hand, clipped off each corner in succession. Next he asked a spectator to suspend a hickory nut from a thread. Walking off thirty feet he wheeled, and at the first shot he cut the thread. Taking six tacks he placed them loosely in a piece of wood. This he placed against a post twenty-five yards away. Borrowing a watch from a bystander, he opened the case for a mirror, shot with his back turned to the mark, and drove each tack into the wood without a miss. The brakeman had been looking on in open-mouthed wonder. As

Vance concluded, the brakeman stepped up to the judge, and, tapping him on the arm, said: "Yes, yer Honor, I guess I was mistaken. That man was not shooting at me."—Denver Times.

A Sight in Paris.

At the Hippodrome there is the greatest spectacle I ever saw, and the splendor of "Vercingetorix" warps much of the nobler attempts in theatricals, says Amy Leslie in the Chicago Record. The new Hippodrome is magnificent in architecture, detail and appointments, and the fine distances, great riders and wonderful generalship of the hordes of red-haired Gauls and athletic Romans, their horses and battles, their tableaux and dances, their chorals and wild stampedes and processions make an ensemble perfectly bewildering and educational. There is nothing of the circus in the performance, on the surface of the spectacle; none of the cheap glitter or sawdust tawdry imitation. It is as imposing and plastic as an opera, and the tableaux, the maneuvers of over 500

warriors on horseback, amazons who ride like the Valkyries and resplendent costumes, great ballets and daring performers with the evanescent talent of pantomime triumphant make the Hippodrome the greatest place of amusement in Paris. Some fair clowns, trained bears and lions, tigers, mild as goats, and some good gymnasts and a family of aerialists make up enough of a circus bill to keep the early crowd busy and entertained and about nine "Vercingetorix" arrives with gorgeous panoplies and scenic assistance from the big stage at one end of the amphitheater. It is all very inspiring and makes American reminders a spectacular addenda to Kiralfy shows and the circus look very meek and lowly in distant comparison.

Search for the Searcher.

The duke of the Abruzzi having started from Italy some time since to look for Andree in the arctic regions, Captain W. Bade Di Wismar has now started from the east coast of Spitzbergen to look for the duke of the Abruzzi.