CLASSICS TO GO

ACROSS CHINA ON FOOT

EDWIN J.DINGLE

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INTRODUCTORY

The scheme. *Why I am walking across Interior China*. *Leaving Singapore*. *Ignorance of life and travel in China*. *The "China for the Chinese" cry*. *The New China and the determination of the Government*. *The voice of the people*. *The province of Yün-nan and the forward movement*. *A prophecy*. *Impressions of Saigon*. *Comparison of French and English methods*. *At Hong-Kong*. *Cold sail up the Whang-poo*. *Disembarkation*. *Foreign population of Shanghai*. *Congestion in the city*. *Wonderful Shanghai.*

Through China from end to end. From Shanghai, 1,500 miles by river and 1,600 miles walking overland, from the greatest port of the Chinese Empire to the frontier of British Burma.

That is my scheme.

I am a journalist, one of the army of the hard-worked who go down early to the Valley. I state this because I would that the truth be told; for whilst engaged in the project with which this book has mainly to deal I was subjected to peculiar designations, such as "explorer" and other newspaper extravagances, and it were well, perhaps, for my reader to know once for all that the writer is merely a newspaper man, at the time on holiday.

The rather extreme idea of walking across this Flowery Land came to me early in the year 1909, although for many years I had cherished the hope of seeing Interior China ere modernity had robbed her and her wonderful people of their isolation and antediluvianism, and ever since childhood my interest in China has always been considerable. A little prior to the Chinese New Year, a friend of mine dined with me at

my rooms in Singapore, in the Straits Settlements, and the conversation about China resulted in our decision then and there to travel through the Empire on holiday. He, because at the time he had little else to do; the author, because he thought that a few months' travel in mid-China would, from a journalistic standpoint, be passed profitably, the intention being to arrive home in dear old England late in the summer of the same year.

We agreed to cross China on foot, and accordingly on February 22, 1909, just as the sun was sinking over the beautiful harbor of Singapore—that most valuable strategic Gate of the Far East, where Crown Colonial administration, however, is allowed by a lethargic British Government to become more and more bungled every year—we settled down on board the French mail steamer *Nera*, bound for Shanghai. My friends, good fellows, in reluctantly speeding me on my way, prophesied that this would prove to be my last long voyage to a last long rest, that the Chinese would never allow me to come out of China alive. Such is the ignorance of the average man concerning the conditions of life and travel in the interior of this Land of Night.

Here, then, was I on my way to that land towards which all the world was straining its eyes, whose nation, above all nations of the earth, was altering for better things, and coming out of its historic shell. "Reform, reform, reform," was the echo, and I myself was on the way to hear it.

At the time I started for China the cry of "China for the Chinese" was heard in all countries, among all peoples. Statesmen were startled by it, editors wrote the phrase to death, magazines were filled with copy—good, bad and indifferent—mostly written, be it said, by men whose knowledge of the question was by no means complete: editorial opinion, and contradiction of that opinion, were printed side by side in journals having a good name. To one

who endeavored actually to understand what was being done, and whither these broad tendencies and strange cravings of the Chinese were leading a people who formerly were so indifferent to progress, it seemed essential that he should go to the country, and there on the spot make a study of the problem.

Was the reform, if genuine at all, universal in China? Did it reach to the ends of the Empire?

That a New China had come into being, and was working astounding results in the enlightened provinces above the Yangtze and those connected with the capital by railway, was common knowledge; but one found it hard to believe that the west and the south-west of the empire were moved by the same spirit of Europeanism, and it will be seen that China in the west moves, if at all, but at a snail's pace: the second part of this volume deals with that portion of the subject.

And it may be that the New China, as we know it in the more forward spheres of activity, will only take her proper place in the family of nations after fresh upheavals. Rivers of blood may yet have to flow as a sickening libation to the gods who have guided the nation for forty centuries before she will be able to attain her ambition of standing line to line with the other powers of the eastern and western worlds. But it seems that no matter what the cost, no matter what she may have to suffer financially and nationally, no matter how great the obstinacy of the people towards the reform movement, the change is coming, has already come with alarming rapidity, and has come to stay. China is changing—let so much be granted; and although the movement may be hampered by a thousand general difficulties, presented by the ancient civilization of a people whose customs and manners and ideas have stood the test of time since the days contemporary with those of Solomon,

and at one time bade fair to test eternity, the Government cry of "China for the Chinese" is going to win. Chinese civilization has for ages been allowed to get into a very bad state of repair, and official corruption and deceit have prevented the Government from making an effectual move towards present-day aims; but that she is now making an honest endeavor to rectify her faults in the face of tremendous odds must, so it appears to the writer, be apparent to all beholders. That is the Government view-point. It is important to note this.

In China, however, the Government is not the people. It never has been. It is not to be expected that great political and social reforms can be introduced into such an enormous country as China, and among her four hundred and thirty millions of people, merely by the issue of a few imperial edicts. The masses have to be convinced that any given thing is for the public good before they accept, despite the proclamations, and in thus convincing her own people China has yet to go through the fire of a terrible ordeal. Especially will this be seen in the second part of this volume, where in Yün-nan there are huge areas absolutely untouched by the forward movement, and where the people are living the same life of disease, distress and dirt, of official, social, and moral degradation as they lived when the Westerner remained still in the primeval forest stage. But despite the scepticism and the cynicism of certain writers, whose pessimism is due to a lack of foresight, and despite the fact that she is being constantly accused of having in the past ignominiously failed at the crucial moment in endeavors towards minor reforms, I am one of those who believe that in China we shall see arising a Government whose power will be paramount in the East, and upon the integrity of whose people will depend the peace of Europe. It is much to say. We shall not see it, but our children will. The Government is going to conquer the people. She has done

so already in certain provinces, and in a few years the reform—deep and real, not the make-believe we see in many parts of the Empire to-day—will be universal.

Between Singapore and Shanghai the opportunity occurred of calling at Saigon and Hong-Kong, two cities offering instructive contrasts of French and British administration in the Far East.

Saigon is not troubled much by the Britisher. The nationally-exacting Frenchman has brought it to represent fairly his loved Paris in the East. The approach to the city, through the dirty brown mud of the treacherous Mekong, which is swept down vigorously to the China sea between stretches of monotonous mangrove, with no habitation of man anywhere visible, is distinctly unpicturesque; but Saigon itself, apart from the exorbitance of the charges (especially so to the spendthrift Englishman), is worth the dreary journey of numberless twists and quick turns up-river, annoying to the most patient pilot.

In the daytime, Saigon is as hot as that last bourne whither all evil-doers wander—Englishmen and dogs alone are seen abroad between nine and one. But in the soothing cool of the soft tropical evening, gay-lit boulevards, a magnificent State-subsidized opera-house, alfresco cafés where dawdle the domino-playing absinthe drinkers, the fierce-moustached gendarmes, and innumerable features typically and picturesquely French, induced me easily to believe myself back in the bewildering whirl of the Boulevard des Capucines or des Italiennes. Whether the narrow streets of the native city are clean or dirty, whether garbage heaps lie festering in the broiling sun, sending their disgusting effluvia out to annoy the sense of smell at every turn, the municipality cares not a little bit. Indifference to the well-being of the native pervades it; there is present no progressive prosperity. Every second person I met was, or

seemed to be, a Government official. He was dressed in immaculate white clothes of the typical ugly French cut, trimmed elaborately with an *ad libitum* decoration of gold braid and brass buttons. All was so different from Singapore and Hong-Kong, and one did not feel, in surroundings which made strongly for the *laissez-faire* of the Frenchman in the East, ashamed of the fact that he was an Englishman.

Three days north lies Hong-Kong, an all-important link in the armed chain of Britain's empire east of Suez, bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of Great Britain beyond the seas. The history of this island, ceded to us in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking, is known to everyone in Europe, or should be.

Four and a half days more, and we anchored at Woo-sung; and a few hours later, after a terribly cold run up the river in the teeth of a terrific wind, we arrived at Shanghai.

The average man in Europe and America does not know that this great metropolis of the Far East is far removed from salt water, and that it is the first point on entering the Yangtze-kiang at which a port could be established. It is twelve miles up the Whang-poo. Junks whirled past with curious tattered brown sails, resembling dilapidated verandah blinds, merchantmen were there flying the flags of the nations of the world, all churning up the yellow stream as they hurried to catch the flood-tide at the bar. Then came the din of disembarkation. Enthusiastic hotel-runners, hard-worked coolies, rickshaw men, professional Chinese beggars, and the inevitable hangers-on of a large eastern city crowded around me to turn an honest or dishonest penny. Some rude, rough-hewn lout, covered with grease and coal-dust, pushed bang against me and hurled me without ceremony from his path. My baggage, meantime, was thrown onto a two-wheeled van, drawn by four of those poor human beasts of burden—how horrible to have been born a Chinese coolie!—and I was whirled away to my hotel for tucker. The

French mail had given us coffee and rolls at six, but the excitement of landing at a foreign port does not usually produce the net amount of satisfaction to or make for the sustenance of the inner man of the phlegmatic Englishman, as with the wilder-natured Frenchman. Therefore were our spirits ruffled.

However, my companion and I fed later.

Subsequently to this we agreed not to be drawn to the clubs or mix in the social life of Shanghai, but to consider ourselves as two beings entirely apart from the sixteen thousand and twenty-three Britishers, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, Danes, Portuguese, and other sundry internationals at that moment at Shanghai. They lived there: we were soon to leave.

The city was suffering from the abnormal congestion common to the Orient, with a big dash of the West. Trams, motors, rickshaws, the peculiar Chinese wheelbarrow, horrid public shaky landaus in miniature, conveyances of all kinds, and the swarming masses of coolie humanity carrying or hauling merchandise amid incessant jabbering, yelling, and vociferating, made intense bewilderment before breakfast.

Wonderful Shanghai!

1911

IN GRATEFUL ESTEEM

DURING MY TRAVELS IN INTERIOR CHINA I ONCE LAY AT THE POINT OF DEATH. FOR THEIR UNREMITTING KINDNESS DURING A LONG ILLNESS, I NOW AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME TO MY FRIENDS, MR. AND MRS. A. EVANS, OF TONG-CH'UAN-FU, YÜN-NAN, SOUTH-WEST CHINA, TO WHOSE DEVOTED NURSING AND UNTIRING CARE I OWE MY LIFE.

To travel in China is easy. To walk across China, over roads acknowledgedly worse than are met with in any civilized country in the two hemispheres, and having accommodation unequalled for crudeness and insanitation, is not easy. In deciding to travel in China, I determined to cross overland from the head of the Yangtze Gorges to British Burma on foot; and, although the strain nearly cost me my life, no conveyance was used in any part of my journey other than at two points described in the course of the narrative. For several days during my travels I lay at the point of death. The arduousness of constant mountaineering—for such is ordinary travel in most parts of Western China—laid the foundation of a long illness, rendering it impossible for me to continue my walking, and as a consequence I resided in the interior of China during a period of convalescence of several months duration, at the end of which I continued my cross-country tramp. Subsequently I returned into Yün-nan from Burma, lived again in Tong-ch'uan-fu and Chao-t'ong-fu, and traveled in the wilds of the surrounding country. Whilst traveling I lived on Chinese food, and in the Miao country, where rice could not be got, subsisted for many days on maize only.

My sole object in going to China was a personal desire to see China from the inside. My trip was undertaken for no other purpose. I carried no instruments (with the exception of an aneroid), and did not even make a single survey of the untrodden country through which I occasionally passed. So far as I know, I am the only traveler, apart from members of the missionary community, who has ever resided far away in the interior of the Celestial Empire for so long a time.

Most of the manuscript for this book was written as I went along>—a good deal of it actually by the roadside in rural China. When my journey was completed, the following news

paragraph in the North China Daily News (of Shanghai) was brought to my notice:—

> *"All the Legations (at Peking) have received anonymous letters from alleged revolutionaries in Shanghai, containing the warning that an extensive anti-dynastic uprising is imminent. If they do not assist the Manchus, foreigners will not be harmed; otherwise, they will be destroyed in a general massacre.*
>
> *"The missives were delivered mysteriously, bearing obliterated postmarks.*
>
> *"In view of the recent similar warnings received by the Consuls, uneasiness has been created."*

The above appeared in the journal quoted on June 3rd, 1910. The reader, in perusing my previously written remarks on the spirit of reform and how far it has penetrated into the innermost corners of the empire, should bear this paragraph in mind, for there is more Boxerism and unrest in China than we know of. My account of the Hankow riots of January, 1911, through which I myself went, will, with my experience of rebellions in Yün-nan, justify my assertion.

I should like to thank all those missionaries who entertained me as I proceeded through China, especially Mr. John Graham and Mr. C.A. Fleischmann, of the China Inland Mission, who transacted a good deal of business for me and took all trouble uncomplainingly. I am also indebted to Dr. Clark, of Tali-fu, and to the Revs. H. Parsons and S. Pollard, for several photographs illustrating that section of this book dealing with the tribes of Yün-nan.

I wish to express my acknowledgments to several well-known writers on far Eastern topics, notably to Dr. G.E. Morrison, of Peking, the Rev. Sidney L. Hulick, M.A., D.D., and Mr. H.B. Morse, whose works are quoted. Much information was also gleaned from other sources.

My thanks are due also to Mr. W. Brayton Slater and to my brother, Mr. W.R. Dingle, for their kindness in having negotiated with my publishers in my absence in Inland China; and to the latter, for unfailing courtesy and patience, I am under considerable obligation. "Across China on Foot" would have appeared in the autumn of 1910 had the printers' proofs, which were several times sent to me to different addresses in China, but which dodged me repeatedly, come sooner to hand.

[Signature: Edwin Dingle]

HANKOW, HUPEH, CHINA.

FIRST JOURNEY

FROM SHANGHAI UP THE LOWER YANGTZE TO ICHANG

CHAPTER I.

To Ichang, an everyday trip. Start from Shanghai, and the city's appearance. At Hankow. Meaning of the name. Trio of strategic and military points of the empire. Han-yang and Wu-ch'ang. Commercial and industrial future of Hankow. Getting our passports. Britishers in the city. The commercial Chinaman. The native city: some impressions. Clothing of the people. Cotton and wool. Indifference to comfort. Surprise at our daring project. At Ichang. British gunboat and early morning routine. Our vain quest for aid. Laying in stores and commissioning our boat. Ceremonies at starting gorges trip. Raising anchor, and our departure.

Let no one who has been so far as Ichang, a thousand miles from the sea, imagine that he has been into the interior of China.

It is quite an everyday trip. Modern steamers, with every modern convenience and luxury, probably as comfortable as any river steamers in the world, ply regularly in their two services between Shanghai and this port, at the foot of the Gorges.

The Whang-poo looked like the Thames, and the Shanghai Bund like the Embankment, when I embarked on board a Jap boat *en route* for Hankow, and thence to Ichang by a smaller steamer, on a dark, bitterly cold Saturday night, March 6th, 1909. I was to travel fifteen hundred miles up that greatest artery of China. The Yangtze surpasses in importance to the Celestial Empire what the Mississippi is to America, and yet even in China there are thousands of resident foreigners who know no more about this great river than the average Smithfield butcher. Ask ten men in Fleet Street or in Wall

Street where Ichang is, and nine will be unable to tell you. Yet it is a port of great importance, when one considers that the handling of China's vast river-borne trade has been opened to foreign trade and residence since the Chefoo Convention was signed in 1876, that Ichang is a city of forty thousand souls, and has a gross total of imports of nearly forty millions of taels.

Of Hankow, however, more is known. Here we landed after a four days' run, and, owing to the low water, had to wait five days before the shallower-bottomed steamer for the higher journey had come in. The city is made up of foreign concessions, as in other treaty ports, but away in the native quarter there is the real China, with her selfish rush, her squalidness and filth among the teeming thousands. There dwell together, literally side by side, but yet eternally apart, all the conflicting elements of the East and West which go to make up a city in the Far East, and particularly the China coast.

Hankow means literally Han Mouth, being situated at the juncture of the Han River and the Yangtze. Across the way, as I write, I can see Han-yang, with its iron works belching out black curls of smoke, where the arsenal turns out one hundred Mauser rifles daily. (This is but a fraction of the total work done.) It is, I believe, the only steel-rolling mill in China. Long before the foreigner set foot so far up the Yangtze, Hankow was a city of great importance—the Chinese used to call it the centre of the world. Ten years ago I should have been thirty days' hard travel from Peking; at the present moment I might pack my bag and be in Peking within thirty-six hours. Hankow, with Tientsin and Nanking, makes up the trio of principal strategic points of the Empire, the trio of centers also of greatest military activity. On the opposite bank of the river I can see Wu-ch'ang, the provincial capital, the seat of the Viceroyalty of two of the

most turbulent and important provinces of the whole eighteen.

Hankow, Han-yang, and Wu-ch'ang have a population of something like two million people, and it is safe to prophesy that no other centre in the whole world has a greater commercial and industrial future than Hankow.

Here we registered as British subjects, and secured our Chinese passports, resembling naval ensigns more than anything else, for the four provinces of Hu-peh, Kwei-chow, Szech'wan, and Yün-nan. The Consul-General and his assistants helped us in many ways, disillusioning us of the many distorted reports which have got into print regarding the indifference shown to British travelers by their own consuls at these ports. We found the brethren at the Hankow Club a happy band, with every luxury around them for which hand and heart could wish; so that it were perhaps ludicrous to look upon them as exiles, men out in the outposts of Britain beyond the seas, building up the trade of the Empire. Yet such they undoubtedly were, most of them having a much better time than they would at home. There is not the roughing required in Hankow which is necessary in other parts of the empire, as in British East Africa and in the jungles of the Federated Malay States, for instance. Building the Empire where there is an abundance of the straw wherewith to make the bricks, is a matter of no difficulty.

And then the Chinese is a good man to manage in trade, and in business dealings his word is his bond, generally speaking, although we do not forget that not long ago a branch in North China of the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank was swindled seriously by a shroff who had done honest duty for a great number of years. It cannot, however, be said that such behavior is a common thing among the commercial class. My personal experience has been that John does what he says he will do, and for years he will go

on doing that one thing; but it should not surprise you if one fine morning, with the infinite sagacity of his race, he ceases to do this when you are least expecting it—and he "does" you. Keep an eye on him, and the Chinese to be found in Hankow having dealings with Europeans in business is as good as the best of men.

We wended our way one morning into the native city, and agreed that few inconveniences of the Celestial Empire make upon the western mind a more speedy impression than the entire absence of sanitation. In Hankow we were in mental suspense as to which was the filthier native city—Hankow or Shanghai. But we are probably like other travelers, who find each city visited worse than the last. Should there arise in their midst a man anxious to confer an everlasting blessing upon his fellow Chinese, no better work could he do than to institute a system approaching what to our Western mind is sanitation. We arrived, of course, in the winter, and, having seen it at a time when the sun could do but little in increasing the stenches, we leave to the imagination what it would be in the summer, in a city which for heat is not excelled by Aden.[A] During the summer of 1908 no less than twenty-eight foreigners succumbed to cholera, and the native deaths were numberless.

The people were suffering very much from the cold, and it struck me as one of the unaccountable phenomena of their civilization that in their ingenuity in using the gifts of Nature they have never learned to weave wool, and to employ it in clothing—that is, in a general sense. There are a few exceptions in the empire. The nation is almost entirely dependent upon cotton for clothing, which in winter is padded with a cheap wadding to an abnormal thickness. The common people wear no underclothing whatever. When they sleep they strip to the skin, and wrap themselves in a single wadded blanket, sleeping the sleep of the tired

people their excessive labor makes them. And, although their clothes might be the height of discomfort, they show their famous indifference to comfort by never complaining. These burdensome clothes hang around them like so many bags, with the wide gaps here and there where the wind whistles to the flesh. It is a national characteristic that they are immune to personal inconveniences, a philosophy which I found to be universal, from the highest to the lowest.

Everybody we met, from the British Consul-General downward, was surprised to know that my companion and I had no knowledge of the Chinese language, and seemed to look lightly upon our chances of ever getting through.

It was true. Neither my companion nor myself knew three words of the language, but went forward simply believing in the good faith of the Chinese people, with our passports alone to protect us. That we should encounter difficulties innumerable, that we should be called upon to put up with the greatest hardships of life, when viewed from the standard to which one had been accustomed, and that we should be put to great physical endurance, we could not doubt. But we believed in the Chinese, and believed that should any evil befall us it would be the outcome of our own lack of forbearance, or of our own direct seeking. We knew that to the Chinese we should at once be "foreign devils" and "barbarians," that if not holding us actually in contempt, they would feel some condescension in dealing and mixing with us; but I was personally of the opinion that it was easier for us to walk through China than it would be for two Chinese, dressed as Chinese, to walk through Great Britain or America. What would the canny Highlander or the rural English rustic think of two pig-tailed men tramping through his countryside?

We anchored at Ichang at 7:30 a.m. on March 19th. I fell up against a boatman who offered to take us ashore. An uglier

fellow I had never seen in the East. The morning sunshine soon dried the decks of the gunboat *Kinsha* (then stationed in the river for the defense of the port) which English jack-tars were swabbing in a half-hearted sort of way, and all looked rosy enough.[B] But for the author, who with his companion was a literal "babe in the wood," the day was most eventful and trying to one's personal serenity. We had asked questions of all and sundry respecting our proposed tramp and the way we should get to work in making preparations. Each individual person seemed vigorously to do his best to induce us to turn back and follow callings of respectable members of society. From Shanghai upwards we might have believed ourselves watched by a secret society, which had for its motto, "Return, oh, wanderer, return!" Hardly a person knew aught of the actual conditions of the interior of the country in which he lived and labored, and everyone tried to dissuade us from our project.

Coming ashore in good spirits, we called at the Consulate, at the back of the city graveyard, and were smoking his cigars and giving his boy an examination in elementary English, when the Consul came down. It was not possible, however, for us to get much more information than we had read up, and the Consul suggested that the most likely person to be of use to us would be the missionary at the China Inland Mission. Thither we repaired, following a sturdy employé of Britain, but we found that the C.I.M. representative was not to be found—despite our repairing. So off we trotted to the chief business house of the town, at the entrance to which we were met by a Chinese, who bowed gravely, asked whether we had eaten our rice, and told us, quietly but pointedly, that our passing up the rough stone steps would be of no use, as the manager was out. A few minutes later I stood reading the inscription on the gravestone near the church, whilst my brave companion, The Other Man, endeavored fruitlessly to pacify a fierce dog in the doorway

of the Scottish Society's missionary premises—but that missionary, too, was out!

What, then, was the little game? Were all the foreigners resident in this town dodging us, afraid of us—or what?

"The latter, the blithering idiots!" yelled The Other Man. He was infuriated. "Two Englishmen with English tongues in their heads, and unable to direct their own movements. Preposterous!" And then, making an observation which I will not print, he suggested mildly that we might fix up all matters ourselves.

Within an hour an English-speaking "one piece cook" had secured the berth, which carried a salary of twenty-five dollars per month, we were well on the way with the engaging of our boat for the Gorges trip, and one by one our troubles vanished.

Laying in stores, however, was not the lightest of sundry perplexities. Curry and rice had been suggested as the staple diet for the river journey; and we ordered, with no thought to the contrary, a picul of best rice, various brands of curries, which were raked from behind the shelves of a dingy little store in a back street, and presented to us at alarming prices—enough to last a regiment of soldiers for pretty well the number of days we two were to travel; and, for luxuries, we laid in a few tinned meats. All was practically settled, when The Other Man, settling his eyes dead upon me, yelled—

"Dingle, you've forgotten the milk!" And then, after a moment, "Oh, well, we can surely do without milk; it's no use coming on a journey like this unless one can rough it a bit." And he ended up with a rude reference to the disgusting sticky condensed milk tins, and we wandered on.

Suddenly he stopped, did The Other Man. He looked at a small stone on the pavement for a long time, eventually cruelly blurting out, directly at me, as if it were all my misdoing: "The sugar, the sugar! We *must* have sugar, man." I said nothing, with the exception of a slight remark that we might do without sugar, as we were to do without milk. There was a pause. Then, raising his stick in the air, The Other Man perorated: "Now, I have no wish to quarrel" (and he put his nose nearer to mine), "you know that, of course. But to *think* we can do without sugar is quite unreasonable, and I had no idea you were such a cantankerous man. We have sugar, or—I go back."

We had sugar. It was brought on board in upwards of twenty small packets of that detestable thin Chinese paper, and The Other Man, with commendable meekness, withdrew several pleasantries he had unwittingly dropped anent deficiencies in my upbringing. Fifty pounds of this sugar were ordered, and sugar—that dirty, brown sticky stuff—got into everything on board—my fingers are sticky even as I write—and no less than exactly one-half went down to the bottom of the Yangtze. Travelers by houseboat on the Upper Yangtze should have some knowledge of commissariat.

Getting away was a tedious business.

Later, the fellows pressed us to spend a good deal of time in the small, dingy, ill-lighted apartment they are pleased to call their club; and the skipper had to recommission his boat, get in provisions for the voyage, engage his crew, pay off debts, and attend to a thousand and one minute details—all to be done after the contract to carry the madcap passengers had been signed and sealed, added to the more practical triviality of three-fourths of the charge being paid down. And then our captain, to add to the dilemma, vociferously yelled to us, in some unknown jargon which got

on our nerves terribly, that he was waiting for a "lucky" day to raise anchor.

However, we did, as the reader will be able to imagine, eventually get away, amid the firing of countless deafening crackers, after having watched the sacrifice of a cock to the God of the River, with the invocation that we might be kept in safety. Poling and rowing through a maze of junks, our little floating caravan, with the two magnates on board, and their picul of rice, their curry and their sugar, and slenderest outfits, bowled along under plain sail, the fore-deck packed with a motley team of somewhat dirty and ill-fed trackers, who whistled and halloed the peculiar hallo of the Upper Yangtze for more wind.

The little township of Ichang was soon left astern, and we entered speedily to all intents and purposes into a new world, a world untrammelled by conventionalism and the spirit of the West.

FOOTNOTES:

[A]

This was written at the time I was in Hankow. When I revised my copy, after I had spent a year and a half rubbing along with the natives in the interior, I could not suppress a smile at my impressions of a great city like Hankow. Since then I have seen more native life, and—more native dirt!—E.J.D.

[B]

The *Kinsha* was the first British gunboat on the Upper Yangtze.

SECOND JOURNEY

ICHANG TO CHUNG-KING, THROUGH THE YANGTZE GORGES

CHAPTER II.

Gloom in Ichang Gorge. *Lightning's effect*. *Travellers' fear*. *Impressive introduction to the Gorges*. *Boat gets into Yangtze fashion*. *Storm and its weird effects*. *Wu-pan: what it is*. *Heavenly electricity and its vagaries*. *Beautiful evening scene, despite heavy rain*. *Bedding soaked*. *Sleep in a Burberry*. *Gorges and Niagara Falls compared*. *Bad descriptions of Yangtze*. *World of eternity*. *Man's significant insignificance*. *Life on board briefly described*. *Philosophy of travel*. *Houseboat life not luxurious*. *Lose our only wash-basin*. *Remarks on the "boy." A change in the kitchen: questionable soup*. *Fairly low temperature*. *Troubles in the larder*. *General arrangements on board*. *Crew's sleeping-place*. *Sacking makes a curtain*. *Journalistic labors not easy*. *Rats preponderate*. *Gorges described statistically*.

Deeper and deeper drooped the dull grey gloom, like a curtain falling slowly and impenetrably over all things.

A vivid but broken flash of lightning, blazing in a flare of blue and amber, poured livid reflections, and illuminated with dreadful distinctness, if only for one ghastly moment, the stupendous cliffs of the Ichang Gorge, whose wall-like steepness suddenly became darkened as black as ink.

Thus, with a grand impressiveness, this great gully in the mountains assumed hugely gigantic proportions, stretching interminably from east to west, up to heaven and down to earth, silhouetted to the north against a small remaining patch of golden purple, whose weird glamour seemed awesomely to herald the coming of a new world into being, lasting but for a moment longer, until again the blue blaze quickly cut up the sky into a thousand shreds and tiny silver

bars. And then, suddenly, with a vast down swoop, as if some colossal bird were taking the earth under her far-outstretching wings, dense darkness fell—impenetrable, sooty darkness, that in a moment shut out all light, all power of sight. Then from out the sombre heavens deep thunder boomed ominously as the reverberating roar of a pack of hunger-ridden lions, and the two men, aliens in an alien land, stood beneath the tattered matting awning with a peculiar fear and some foreboding. We were tied in fast to the darkened sides of the great Ichang Gorge—a magnificent sixteen-mile stretch, opening up the famous gorges on the fourth of the great rivers of the world, which had cleaved its course through a chain of hills, whose perpendicular cliffs form wonderful rock-bound banks, dispelling all thought of the monotony of the Lower Yangtze.

Upstream we had glided merrily upon a fresh breeze, which bore the warning of a storm. All on board was settling down into Yangtze fashion, and the barbaric human clamor of our trackers, which now mutteringly died away, was suddenly taken up, as above recorded, and all unexpectedly answered by a grander uproar—a deep threatening boom of far-off thunder. In circling tones and semitones of wrath it volleyed gradually through the dark ravines, and, startled by the sound, the two travelers, roused for the first time from their natural engrossment in the common doings of the *wu-pan*,[C] saw the reflection of the sun on the waters, now turned to a livid murkiness, deepening with a threatening ink-like aspect as the river rushed voluminously past our tiny floating haven. Strangely silenced were we by this weird terror, and watched and listened, chained to the deck by a thousand mingled fears and fascinations, which breathed upon our nerves like a chill wind. As we became accustomed then to the yellow darkness, we beheld about the landscape a spectral look, and the sepulchral sound of the moving thunder seemed the half-muffled clang of some

great iron-tongued funeral bell. Then came the rain, introduced swiftly by the deafening clatter of another thunder crash that made one stagger like a ship in a wild sea, and we strained our eyes to gaze into a visionary chasm cleaved in twain by the furious lightning. Playing upon the face of the unruffled river, with a brilliancy at once awful and enchanting, this singular flitting and wavering of the heavenly electricity, as it flashed haphazardly around all things, threw about one an illumination quite indescribable.

For hours we sat upon a beam athwart the afterdeck, in silence drinking in the strange phenomenon. We watched, after a small feed of curry and rice, long into the dark hours, when the thunder had passed us by, and in the distant booming one could now imagine the lower notes streaming forth from some great solemn organ symphony. The fierce lightning twitched, as it danced in and out the crevices—inwards, outwards, upwards, then finally lost in one downward swoop towards the river, tearing open the liquid blackness with its crystal blade of fire. The rain ceased not. But soon the moon, peeping out from the tops of a jagged wall above us, looking like a soiled, half-melted snowball, shone full down the far-stretching gorge, and now its broad lustre shed itself, like powdered silver, over the whole scene, so that one could have imagined oneself in the living splendor of some eternal sphere of ethereal sweetness. And so it might have been had the rain abated—a curious accompaniment to a moonlight night. Down it came, straight and determined and businesslike, in the windless silence, dancing like a shower of diamonds of purest brilliance on the background of the placid waters.

Very beautiful, reader, for a time. But would that the rain had been all moonshine!

Glorious was it to revel in for a time. But, during the weary night watches, in a bed long since soaked through, and

one's safest nightclothes now the stolid Burberry, with face protected by a twelve-cent umbrella, even one's curry and rice saturated to sap with the constant drip, and everything around one rendered cold and uncomfortable enough through a perforation in its slenderest part of the worn-out bamboo matting—ah, it was then, *then* that one would have foregone with alacrity the dreams of the nomadic life of the *wu-pan*.

Our introduction, therefore, to the great Gorges of the Upper Yangtze—to China what the Niagara Falls are to America—was not remarkable for its placidity, albeit taken with as much complacency as the occasion allowed.

I do not, however, intend to weary or to entertain the reader, as may be, by a long description of the Yangtze gorges. Time and time again have they fallen to the imaginative pens of travelers—mostly bad or indifferent descriptions, few good; none better, perhaps, than Mrs. Bishop's. But at best they are imaginative—they lack reality. It has been said that the world of imagination is the world of eternity, and as of eternity, so of the Gorges—they cannot be adequately described. As I write now in the Ichang Gorge, I seem veritably to have reached eternity. I seem to have arrived at the bosom of an after-life, where one's body has ceased to vegetate, and where, in an infinite and eternal world of imagination, one's soul expands with fullest freedom. There seems to exist in this eternal world of unending rock and invulnerable precipice permanent realities which stand from eternity to eternity. As the oak dies and leaves its eternal image in the seed which never dies, so these grand river-forced ravines, abused and disabused as may be, go on for ever, despite the scribblers, and one finds the best in his imagination returning by some back-lane to contemplative thought. But as a casual traveler, may I say that the first experience I had of the

gorges made me modest, patient, single-minded, conscious of man's significant insignificance, conscious of the unspeakable, wondrous grandeur of this unvisited corner of the world—a spot in which blustering, selfish, self-conceited persons will not fare well? Humility and patience are the first requisites in traveling on the Upper Yangtze.

Reader, for your sake I refrain from a description. But may I, for perhaps your sake too, if you would wander hither ere the charm of things as they were in the beginning is still unrobbed and unmolested, give you some few impressions of a little of the life—grave, gay, but never unhappy—which I spent with my excellent co-voyager, The Other Man.

It is a part of wisdom, when starting any journey, not to look forward to the end with too much eagerness: hear my gentle whisper that you may never get there, and if you do, congratulate yourself; interest yourself in the progress of the journey, for the present only is yours. Each day has its tasks, its rapids, its perils, its glories, its fascinations, its surprises, and—if you will live as we did, its *curry and rice*. Then, if you are traveling with a companion, remember that it is better to yield a little than to quarrel a great deal. Most disagreeable and undignified is it anywhere to get into the habit of standing up for what people are pleased to call their little rights, but nowhere more so than on the Upper Yangtze houseboat, under the gaze of a Yangtze crew. Life is really too short for continual bickering, and to my way of thinking it is far quieter, happier, more prudent and productive of more peace, if one could yield a little of those precious little rights than to incessantly squabble to maintain them. Therefore, from the beginning to the end of the trip, make the best of everything in every way, and I can assure you, if you are not ill-tempered and suffer not from your liver, Nature will open her bosom and lead you by these strange by-ways into her hidden charms and unadorned recesses of

sublime beauty, uneclipsed for their kind anywhere in the world.

Think not that the life will be luxurious—houseboat life on the Upper Yangtze is decidedly not luxurious. Were it not for the magnificence of the scenery and ever-changing outdoor surroundings, as a matter of fact, the long river journey would probably become unbearably dull.

Our *wu-pan* was to get through the Gorges in as short a time as was possible, and for that reason we traveled in the discomfort of the smallest boat used to face the rapids.

People entertaining the smallest idea of doing things travel in nothing short of a *kwadze*, the orthodox houseboat, with several rooms and ordinary conveniences. Ours was a *wu-pan*—literally five boards. We had no conveniences whatever, and the second morning out we were left without even a wash-basin. As I was standing in the stern, I saw it swirling away from us, and inquiring through a peep-hole, heard the perplexing explanation of my boy. Gesticulating violently, he told us how, with the wash-basin in his hand, he had been pushed by one of the crew, and how, loosened from his grasp, my toilet ware had been gripped by the river—and now appeared far down the stream like a large bead. The Other Man was alarmed at the boy's discomfiture, ejaculated something about the loss being quite irreparable, and with a loud laugh and quite natural hilarity proceeded quietly to use a saucepan as a combined shaving-pot and wash-basin. It did quite well for this in the morning, and during the day resumed its duty as seat for me at the typewriter.

Our boy, apart from this small misfortune, comported himself pretty well. His English was understandable, and he could cook anything. He dished us up excellent soup in enamelled cups and, as we had no ingredients on board so