OPEN DOOR IN MANCHURIA

SHANGHAI MERCHANTS' VISIT

They Were Received Everywhere With the Greatest Courtesy by the Japanese Officials — Trade Seriously Affected by the Disorganized Condition of the Railroads — An Improvement Promised.

North China Daily News, June 12.

On the 17th of last month, four Shanghai merchants, Messrs. C. W. Wrightson, H. de Gray, L. Midwood and J. R. Patterson, left by the C. E. and M. S. Kwangping for Chinwangtao, as a starting point for a brief tour of investigation in Manchuria. In an unofficial way they had determined, as far as possible in the time and circumstances at their disposal, to ascertain the causes of the present difficulty of carrying on trade with Manchuria, and to learn whether or not the Japanese are making unfair use of their military occupation to place restrictions in the way of the traders of other nations. The British commercial attache had already been sent to Newchwang on an official visit having the same object in view, but considerable doubt has been expressed as to the value of what he saw or was shown in an official way. The four representatives of Shanghai trade returned to Shanghai on Saturday, arriving from Hankow, which they had reached overland from Pekin, and in the course of an interview, which he courteously granted yesterday to a representative of this paper, Mr. Wrightson gave some of the impressions and conclusions at which he and his fellow-travelers had arrived.

The itinerary shows that the party traveled by rail from Chinwangtao to Yingkou (Newchwang), where they remained two days, thence proceeded by rail to Liaoyang and after a day's delay on to Mukden, where the stay was somewhat longer. From Mukden they traveled overland in carts a distance of 40 miles to Hsinmintun and from this point the railway brought them back to Peking and Hankow.

Of Manchuria as a country Mr. Wrighton speaks most enthusiastically. "A second Manitoba, or what I imagine Manitoba to be," he described it, a country therefore of vast commercial possibilities.

"And your enquiries?"

"We were everywhere received with the greatest courtesy by the Japanese civil and military officials, and every facility was afforded us in making our investigations. There was still some difficulty in the ordinary way of foreigners traveling in the interior and to Mukden, but we were fortified by passports from Tokio, which immediately gained us every civility and assistance from the administrator at Newchwang. We did not, however, confine our inquiries to Japanese officials but interviewed as many as we could of the leading native merchants."

"To what conclusions did you come?"

"After a most comprehensive inquiry it is most difficult, if not impossible, to offer any satisfactory evidence to substantiate the theory that the Japanese government, through the instrumentality of either its military or civil authorities, is at present purposely interfering with or placing any obstacles in the path of other nations for the industrial exploitation of this important part of the Chinese empire. The absence of demand from this large, fertile, and thickly-populated province, which is not only being felt in the cotton piece-goods trade but in other commodities, is directly and principally attributable to the disorganized condition, both financial and commercial, of this district, a vast area of which, it must be remembered, was practically laid waste by both armies in their recent struggle. That crops were destroyed and entire villages devastated cannot be questioned, and ocular demonstration of the havoc wrought during the war is still obtainable. The Chinese are, however, sustaining their reputation for rapid recuperation, the natives having returned to their usual villages or towns, and the work of rehabilitation is progressing as favorably and quickly as can be expected. Their homes are, however, still, in some cases, under reconstruction, and the crops, it must be noted, are still to be harvested. That a large sum of money has been expended during the past few years in both Russians and Japanese cannot be contradicted, but that a small percentage of this amount has as yet reached the merchant classes is almost generally conceded. It is fair to presume that adventures and speculators have been the principal benefiters. It must not be forgotten that the period at which we are speaking was the year of a big and disastrous war, and that less than eight months have elapsed since a treaty of peace was signed. If I mistake not, a similar condition of affairs existed subsequent to the hostilities in South Africa, when it will be recalled heavy losses were sustained by over-confident traders who over-purchased in anticipation of a demand which materialized only after a long delay. The disruption of transportation facilities by the commandeering of both native junks and carts for military purposes, and the partial destruction of the railway line from Port Arthur to Mukden are also important factors that must be recognized from a trade point of view. The recovery must necessarily be gradual, and while it is true trains are now running between the points named, it is not reasonable to suppose that these were available until quite recently for trade purposes. Patience must therefore be the watchword of those materially interested in this question, and it is my confident belief that a revival of trade on a much larger scale than has hitherto been witnessed will be the final result."

Another very important point on which Mr Wrightson dwelt with special emphasis was that the stock of cotton piece goods, to which the party devoted particular attention, was not found to be more than normal either at the distributing port of Newchwang or in the interior consuming centres. Very exhaustive inquiries on this point were made among the larger dealers and smaller shopkeepers throughout the country traversed as well as in Newchwang, Liaoyang and Mukden.

"Your journey has removed a good many wrong impressions from your mind?"

"Unquestionably. The Japanese would be more than human if they did not make use of their advantages from being in military possession, and they still have 40,000 troops in lower Manchuria. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to withdraw from their occupation in the 18 months allowed by the treaty of peace, and that partly depends on Russia. While the Russians are in occupation of northern Manchuria the Japanese will certainly not withdraw completely from the South. Partly as a result of this the financial system in Manchuria is very unsatisfactory and leaves much to be desired. The circulation of war notes by the Japanese government to the extent of about yen 200,000,000 while increasing the wealth of the province will naturally tend to divert trade to their own country, more especially while this issue continues at any discount from local currency. The Chinese government are tardy in introducing their goods through Manchuria, and the Japanese will become more strongly entrenched the longer the province remains under their control. The powers should therefore be urged, through the usual channels, to use their good offices in expediting the time when the Chinese will assume jurisdiction, and also in concluding arangements whereby the important port of Dalny, through which the Japanese, in the absence of the Chinese custom stations, are now bringing in their goods, not only free of import duty but free of all likin charges to any point in the interior there transportation can be effected by rail, will be placed on a basis similar to the port of Tsingtao, viz: open to the trade of all nations, and a Chinese customs station established for the purpose of collecting the customary duties on the goods passing out of Dalny into Manchuria. The renewal or construction of the railway bridge over the Liao river, in the neighborhod of Hsinmintun, which now seriously interferes with the large junk traffic over this waterway is a matter requiring immediate attention, and seems so reasonable that it cannot be doubted the Japanese government will promptly instruct the military administration to remedy the difficulty beyond further complaint."

After all, the people best able to judge of the future trade prospects of Manchuria are the merchants at Newchwang, and these Mr. Wrightson and his party found to be practically unanimous in opinion that, in addition to the causes already named, the trade of the port is seriously affected by the disorganization of the usual railway transportation between Tiehling and Kuchengtze, the latter a very important distributing centre, now in the hands of the Russians. About 40 miles of the line have been torn up, but is now being relaid. The northern portion of the line is still in possession of the Russians, who are said to be charging arbitrary rates with the purpose of forcing the trade of Kuchengtze through Vladivostok. Thus it is not only the Japanese who are taking advantage of the special circumstances of the time, and if Dalny needs careful watching with one eye, Vladivostok should occupy the Shanghai marchant's other eye.

As a parting word Mr. Wrightson said he had reliable information that since he and his friends left Newchwang a satisfactory adjustment had been made in connection with the failure of a native bank, a financial misadventure which had involved $400,000. Also that approximately the equivalent of Rs. 1,000,000 has lately been remitted to Shanghai by local merchants or bankers. "These reports, if true," he remarked, "are significant and will necessarily inspire confidence."

A CHRISTIAN RESORT.

Hiddenite Free From All Influences —A Place Where Christian People May Find Congenial Surroundings.

Correspondence of The Observer.

Hiddenite, July 15.—"Eureka!" found at last, and not far from the center of civilization and industry, Charlotte, not "the holy grail" nor "the golden fleece," nor "the fountain of perpetual youth," but better than any or all of these, a restful, healthful, summer resort, where cultured tastes and Christian sentiments are not offended at every turn. A place, even on this side of Jordan, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

Davis Brothers have solved the problem as to whether it is possible to provide and successfully conduct a summer resort without the card table, the dance hall, and the saloon—that triumvirate of evil almost everywhere in evidence at such places, obtruding themselves upon the tastes and feelings of Christian people of all creeds. Not one of these is here to be found, by day or by night.

No Shannonhouse is needed here to bring evildoers to justice. And, wonder of wonders, hear it! Ye who would seek to justify your objectionable things by insisting that the people demand these things and therefore the proprietor of a public house must provide them, who make the plea of necessity and are continually telling us that, if you do not these things it won't pay—this hotel is crowded, week in and week out, with the best people of the land. Here assembled, Christian people may meet and mingle in delightful social intercourse, mutually congenial.

The food is the very best the country affords, the cooking is unsurpassed, the cuisine is approaching perfection. And, as a logical sequence, the guests are comfortable and happy. For you enquire, What do the guests do for pastime? That is a pertinent question and the answer is forthcoming. Here is a fine bowling alley, free from all the objectionable features usually attending such places. Over there, a tennis court, yonder a croquet ground, of unique design, affording endless amusement for the children. Down along that rocky cove are long shady lanes and walks, where secrets slumber, and where lovers strayed. "The thickest shade, cold dews, and wind flowers on their heads." More we may not tell.

The proprietors of fried chicken fame, multiplied their proofs on Sabbath and that it will be from other Davis Brothers certainly do enjoy the unqualified esteem, confidence and encouragement of every citizen from this and a month in this entire section of the State. In their noble and generous desire to provide such a resort as we have described, they have established a precedent which men may safely follow and have produced an institution which will prove a boon to society and a blessing to the Church. These men are not in money, and making an honest, economical compliance, made up of principles or those of the Christian religion. They are worthy of the high esteem in which they are held by their fellow citizens. To provide for every emergency and make the most complete provision for the safety and bodily well-being of the guests, a resident physician is found here, Dr. D. H. Cooper, a Charlotte boy and son of Rev. H. C. Cooper, D. D., of Dilworth. Dr. Cooper is making a name for himself, and on every hand we hear of his success in his chosen profession. The public, we predict, will know more of this young man.

RECORD PRICE FOR FLOUR.

When a Fifty Pound Sack Produced a Million Dollars.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The costliest flour that St. Louis ever baked into cakes brought $20,000 a pound, and gingersnaps that it produced sold for $1 each. Even at that high price people bought them by the dozen. It was one of the rare instances when the high price of foodstuff comes as a blessing, for every cent of the money went to swell the fund of the sanitary commission organized by Dr. Henry W. Bellows, of Boston, during the civil war, which furnished, to relieve suffering of Federal troops, more than $15,000,000 in supplies and $5,000,000 in money.

The man whose act instigated a movement that caused a single fifty pound sack of flour worth $15 to produce upward of $1,000,000 is now living in Sycamore, Ill. At the age of 70 years he is the county surveyor of De Kalb county, and is one of the best known citizens of northern Illinois. The story that he tells is full of human interest from start to finish.

In 1864 the mining town of Austin, Nev., was about to vote on the question as to whether it would incorporate and elect a full set of town officers. On one side of the municipal contest was a man named R. G. Gridley, and on the other side was a citizen of the name of Herrick. Gridley bet Herrick that his side would win; if it didn't he would carry a sack of flour on his shoulder from his cabin to Herrick's place at the opposite side of the town, a mile distant. Herrick was to do the same if he lost. There was a deal of war time political feeling, and it was agreed that if Gridley, who was born in Tennessee but was a loyal Northerner, should lose he would have to keep step to the music of "Old John Brown," played by a brass band engaged for the occasion. If Herrick had to carry the flour he would do so to the enlivening strains of "Dixie."

Gridley's side lost and all of the candidates on Herrick's side were elected. When it came time for Gridley to make good in his election wager there was a tremendous outpouring of people to witness the event. The crowd on the sidewalks and in the street marched along, singing the words of the familiar song until the canons fairly resounded with their efforts. The sack of flour had been decorated with red, white and blue ribbons, with a small flag at each corner.

After Gridley had turned the sack over to Herrick the former offered to pay him $25 for the flour. Herrick at once said that he could have it and that he would turn the money over to the fund of the sanitary commission, which had been organized to relieve suffering in battlefields and hospitals. This was the spark that only needed to be ignited to set on fire a noble project. Mr. Armstrong, who had gone from Milkaukee to the far West before the war broke out, was a witness of the affair, and he said that he wanted the flour, too, and that he would give $50 for it. In a moment the idea seemed to blaze into the greatest enthusiasm. Gridley, Herrick and others kept on bidding until the price reached $45, when it was raised by $2.50 bids until it got to $50.

At this juncture Mr. Armstrong proposed that the crowd march to Main and Cedar streets, the principal corner of the town; that the band should go along and play "Dixie," just to put the other side in good humor. The situation was announced to a still larger crowd, when Gridley started the ball to rolling by bidding $50 for the flour. It ran up by fives and tens until a butcher bid $450. He flunked on his bid, but another citizen, named M. J. Noyes, said that he would take the butcher's bid, and he paid the money for the flour. Noyes offered it to Gridley for $200 and he took it. Then the latter put it up again, and the bidding continued until at the close of the day the sack brought $6,000.

Gridley then offered to take the sack and sell it in all of the towns, villages and cities in Nevada and California, his expenses to be deducted from the proceeds. He said he would give three months of his time free of charge.

On this basis the enterprise was started. Most of the towns had got wind of what was being done, and the information spread to distant Western localities. Wells Fargo & Co., gave Gridley a pass that carried him and his sack of flour over their stage lines anywhere in that country, and the Overland Telegraph Company agreed to frank all the messages that he cared to send to carry out his programme. One day, carrying the sack of flour on his shoulder, he left Austin by the Overland stage for arrival in Virginia City by 5 p. m. the next day. A band had been engaged and prominent citizens met him in Flowery Canon and escorted him to Virginia City. A platform had been erected and Gridley carried his burden up in plain sight of a great concourse of people. That evening the bidding reached $2,000. By that time a great rivalry had arisen among the towns as to which should outbid the others in boosting the fifty pounds of breadstuff to an unheard of price. From Virginia City Gridley marched over to Gold Hill, where the flour brought a total of $5,300. Silver City promptly raised this sum by $50, and Dayton climbed up to $6,800. Then Silver City tried to outbid its neighbor, but failed, Gold Hill raising its figure to $7,[illegible]. Virginia City gave the scheme another boost, reaching the sum of $10,[illegible] Carson City bid $2,[illegible] Esmeralda raised $2,000, Ophir $1,000, Washoe City $1,500.

The great American staple in this way was sold over and over again until an aggregate of more than $30,000 in gold was gathered in and turned over to Dr. Bellows's commission. Sales were made in all of the towns of Nevada and California, and a very enormous sum had been realized for the good cause.

Finally, the flour was put into a buckskin sack and shipped to the sanitary fair at St. Louis. It was placed on special exhibition and thousands paid liberally to get a look at it. After the close of the fair the product of a California wheat field was mixed with a great quantity of everyday flour and baked into ginger snaps that readily sold for $1 a cake. It has been estimated that the total of $1,000,000 was realized from the hundreds of sales and its final disposal.

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PLEASURED PARTY RESCUED.

House-boat Clifford Disabled Off Wrightsville Beach and Passengers Have Thrilling Experience.

Special to The Observer.

Wilmington, July 16.—A pleasure party aboard the house-boat Clifford was rescued off Moore's Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, after a thrilling experience Sunday afternoon. The Clifford was passing in, out and among the breakers when a heavy sea boarded her, smashed in the glass of the engine room and disabled the gasoline engine sparker, which was flooded with water. Capt. C. D. Maffitt and several masters of pleasure craft at the Hotel Tarrymoore put to the rescue another yacht and brought the party in badly frightened and soaked with water. Five young ladies from the hotels and six gentlemen composed the party. They were forced to stick close to the upper deck to escape being washed overboard, as the boat wallowed helplessly in the surf.

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