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EXPERIENCES IN CHINA

NOTE—The following letter is one of many interesting communications which are being received by Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Edwin Barton, who are spending the winter at The Harvard, from their son-in-law, Mr. George Gleason, a Y. M. C. A. secretary in Japan, who has been stationed in Manchuria doing missionary work for the Japanese army.

Mrs. Barton promises other letters of similar character which the editor feels sure will be of more than usual interest to readers of THE OUTLOOK.

YINGKOW, CHINA—This morning I had my first experience at duck shooting and with a native doctor, which by the way, is the best part of my letter. We left for the shooting grounds, five miles distant, last evening, a brisk walk in the clear moonlight, bringing us to Wayentai, a little village with a hotel, store and few farm houses. As the Japanese soldiers were occupying that region the best houses were used by them and in consequence we were obliged to put up at the store, where our accommodations were not of the best.

The buildings which make up the vast number of North China houses are unique and I realize that it is useless to attempt to give a pen picture of them, because I had read much of China before coming here and had in my mind, no replica of these strange one story, one room, mud structures.

A few poles of varying size, some boards, three or four sticks of small timber, reed matting for the roof, sheets of paper for the windows, two planks for the doors at the front and rear, and bricks for the kang, are all they consist of.

This kang is by the way, the most conspicuous feature of the interior, a large raised, oven-like affair which serves as a seat by day, bed by night and for warmth in winter. This particular kang might if crowded, as no one of us can imagine, accommodate a dozen or more sleepers on a cold winter night and to heat it sufficiently so that all the occupants might derive a little warmth, requires only a few stalks of millet, much the same as our India corn stalks.

This night, by the way, may have had something to do with my experience with a native doctor of the old school, who applied special treatment to the small of my back for the sum of twenty cents. The old physician is a character in this part of China, and as did his ancestors, professes to have received special divine power to cure, especially in troubles connected with broken bones.

I reported to him through another hunter, who had come up from town and who spoke Chinese, that I had for ten years suffered slightly from a weak back, and that it would be a favor if he would treat me for it. His answer was that in one treatment it would be difficult to remove an ailment of such long standing, but he would try. The performance that followed has given me much food for thought.

First he had me remove the clothing exposing the small of my back. Then taking in his hand a bowl of "Shamshu"

a kind of Chinese wine very strong in alcohol, he filled his mouth with it. In one hand he held five or six joss sticks, or sort of Fourth of July slow matches, and as he made signs with this burning wand, he proceeded to give me a series of cold shivers by spurtng from his mouth with great force, the alcoholic wine. Something connected with the quick evaporation made the stuff, even though coming from his mouth, seem as cold as ice, and I winced vigorously as the assaults were continuously made.

After using the wand a short time, he laid it aside and made all further signs with the middle finger of his right hand. Following the second spouting from his powerful mouth, he gave a horrible yell, continuing it by a series of low mumbings, like prayers. Then came several more of the spurtings, and in all three terrible howls so weird considering all those surroundings that had I been the only foreigner in the house, I believe that I should have bolted for Yingkow, half clad as I was. Visions of Boxers, bloody knives, and other horrors came up before me, but with four other strong men in the room I was able to stick it through. A little peaceful rubbing followed next, and a few friendly cautions to keep from taking cold, ended the treatment at the hands of a Chinese doctor.

The old man has the reputation of being very devout. Evenings he is often heard, even in the cold winter, out of doors saying prayers. And on certain special nights of the year he goes to the graves of his ancestors and spends the whole night in communication with the unseen.

But to the ducks! We were up at 2:30 and off before 4, three farmers pushing us in a shallow boat, to the shooting grounds a mile away. Arriving in the sparkling light of the morning star, we hid our boat in the tall reeds just before the first light of dawn broke in the east. Then crack went the first shot of the day, as fine duck came out of the darkness, into the light sky of the east. Flop went the bird into the water, and the business had commenced.

For more than two hours there was not a time when for ten minutes, birds were not in sight, and at times, we could not put the cartridges in fast enough to catch all the good shots. At a random guess I think that had we been crack shots, we might have killed fifty or seventy-five instead of fifteen.

A little after seven the best of the shooting was over, and what birds were still flying were mostly going high. We then left for the hotel took a second breakfast, and after an hours rest, started for home. By eleven o'clock we were back in town and ready for any necessary business.

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