

Secrets of the Forbidden City

Lassa From the Inside Portrayed by the Pen of a Graphic Writer

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger

One cannot help thinking that as much as the world professed to abhor the dispatch of the British troops into inoffensive Tibet, the universal passion, curiosity, led the protestants to be secretly glad, for was not Tibet a forbidden country? Was not its mysterious capital, Lassa, upon which foreign eyes had indeed dwelt furtively a century ago, a forbidden city? The world then waited patiently to hear that the expedition had come within sight of the wonderful golden-roofed Potala, and eagerly watched for reports upon the most mysterious city in the world.

Lassa, which has not always been a city closed to the unbelievers, was found to be in some particulars just what a few travelers who had been there said it was. It is remarkable for two things—the most wonderful building in the world and unequalled dirt.

Nowhere in the world today will be found a building so magnificently designed for its location as the Potala, the residence of the Dalai Lama, Buddha's representative and the temporal ruler of the Tibetans. Its glittering minarets and golden roofs may be seen like a giant heliograph flashing the sun's rays for miles. Upon approaching this gigantic structure, it is found to be almost a part of an enormous hill of granite. It is a most picturesque and rambling collection of massive walls, terraces and thousands of well-worn stone steps.

At first sight it suggests the popular idea of the first few courses of the tower of Babel.

Yet there is something inspiring in the slight distance-of this seat of Tibetan government. It seems to be a castle in the eastern fairy tale and the imagination easily fancy it overrun with picturesque figures and sumptuously furnished apartments. But that great building is found, upon entrance, to be a hollow mockery, and what is more it has been the scene of more murders than a writer of medieval romance would dare to invent. The British expedition upon entering the sacred precincts of the Potala, found the palace to be a dingy structure, and like every building in Lassa, in poor repair. It was here that the treaty between the Tibetans and the British was signed, in the throne room, or reception hall, which is lighted from above, and which contains a throne, covered by a canopy of silk embroidered with dragons. Its walls are painted with symbolic pictures; once, perhaps, a gorgeous palace, it now shows the lack of care which has been its portion.

Romance still clings to the Potala. Like Imray, its sacred inmate has achieved the impossible. Divinity or no, he has at least the divine power of vanishing. Those hideous corridors and passages have been for centuries, and are, perhaps, at this very moment the scenes of unnatural piety and crime. Yet within the precincts of Lassa, the taking of life in any form is a sacrilege. Buddha's first law was "thou shalt not kill"; and life is held so sacred by his devout followers that they are careful not to kill the smallest insect.

Since the assumption of temporal power by the fifth grand lama, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the whole history of the Tibetan hierarchy has been a record of bloodshed and intrigue. The fifth grand lama, the first to receive the title of dalai, was a most unscrupulous ruler, who secured the temporal power by inciting the Mongols to invade Tibet, and received as his reward the kingship. He then established his claim to the godhead by tampering with Buddhist history and writ. The sixth incarnation was executed by the Chinese on account of his profligacy. The seventh was deposed by the Chinese as privy to the murder of the regent. After death of the eighth, of whom nothing can be learned, it would seem that the tables were turned, the regents systematically murdered their charges, and the crime of the seventh dalai lama was visited upon four successive incarnations. The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth all died prematurely, assassinated, it is believed, by their regents.

There are no legends of malmye huts, secret smotherings and hired assassins. The children disappeared; they were absorbed into the universal essence; they were literally too good to live; their regents and protectors, monks only less sacred than themselves, provided that the spirit in its yearning for the next state should not be long detained in its mortal husk. No questions were asked. How could the devout trace the comings and goings of the divine Avalokita, the lord of mercy and judgment, who ordains into what heaven or hell demon, god, hero, mollusk or ape their spirit must enter, according to their sins?

As nearly every one now knows, Lassa is a city of pilgrimage; it is, in a measure, to Buddhism what Mecca is to Mohammedanism. You meet pilgrims by the score, even by the hundred, coming from the west to reach the Ling-Kor, the city's via sacra, by the corner where the Chinese temples come near to meeting the Pargo-Kaling gate. They pass silently and with dignity through the ranks of the assembled beggars, praying wheels in hand and incantations on their lips. Heavily clad in an enveloping cloak of duldest color, barefooted, or with

thick, shapeless boots, bareheaded and with no ornament save a turquoise in the left ear, the men and women of the lower class are indistinguishable at first sight.

During the stay of the British the Jo-Kang, or cathedral, in Lassa, was visited for the first time by unbelievers. The Jo-Kang is the holy of holies of Buddhism. It is not always realized that it is in the cathedral of Lassa, not in the palace outside, that the spiritual life of Tibet and of the countless millions of northern Buddhism is wholly centered. The policy of isolation which has for so long been the chief characteristic of the faith finds its fullest expression in the fanatical jealousy with which this temple the heart of focus of lamaism, has been safeguarded against the stranger's intrusion.

What Tibet is to the rest of the world, what Lassa is to the Tibet, that the Jo-Kang is to Lassa, and it is not entirely clear in its spirit of more than one so-called description of the interior that any European, or even native spy, has ever before ventured inside. There has perhaps, been reason enough for this. It is possible that pardon for having visited the city of Lassa, or even Potala palace—which is in comparison almost a place of resort—might have been obtained on terms, but there could hardly have been a reprieve for the luckless intruder once discovered inside these darkened and windowless quadrangles. Certainly neither the ground plan published by Giorgi in the eighteenth century nor any of the detailed accounts published more recently suggest that their authors had any first hand acquaintance with the place.

The exterior is devoid of either beauty or dignity. The interior on the other hand, is unquestionably the most important and interesting thing in Central Asia. It is the treasure-house and kaabah, not of the country alone, but of the faith, and it is curious that, while the magnificent Potala is a casket containing nothing either ancient or specially venerated, the priceless gems of the Jo-Kang should be housed in a building which literally has no outside walls at all.

All around the cathedral the dirty and insignificant council chambers and offices, in which the affairs of Tibet are debated and administered, lean like parasites against it for support. The huddled together and obscuring the sacred structure to which they owe their stability, in a way that seems mischievously significant of the whole state of Tibet.

A member of the British mission who visited the Jo-Kang under peculiar circumstances, described this remarkable visit in these words:

It is not strangers only against whom the great doors of the Jo-Kang have been barred. Exclusion from its sacred precincts is officially pronounced against those who have incurred the suspicion, or displeasure, of the ruling hierarchy of Lassa, and it is a curious proof of the autocratic power which is exercised with regard to this cathedral, as well as of the insignificance of the suzerainty, that on August 11 in this year the viceroy himself, going in state to the Jo-Kang to offer prayer on the occasion of the Chinese emperor's birthday, had the doors shut in his face.

To this insult the opportunity I have enjoyed of examining the temple with fulness that would have otherwise have been impossible was due. Anxiety to relate the Amban—who was on the subsequent day grudgingly permitted to visit the ground floor only of the building—used our presence in Lassa to teach the keepers of the cathedral a lesson in manners. At any rate a definite invitation was one day extended to one or two members of the mission to make a morning visit into Lassa for the purpose of examining the treasures of the innermost sanctuary of Buddhism. It was accepted.

Just in front, seen through a forest of pillars, was an open and verandahed courtyard, its great age was at once apparent. The paintings on the walls were barely distinguishable through a heavy cloak of dirt and grease, and it was difficult to imagine the colors with which the capitals of the pillars and the raftered roof overhead, had originally been painted. The court is open to the sky, and is surrounded by none of the small chapels which are the chief feature of the inner quadrangles of the Jo-Kang.

The architecture is of the kind invariably in religious buildings in Tibet—a double row of pillars carry the half-roof overhead, each supporting on a small capital a large bracketed abacus, voluted and curved on both sides and charged in the center with a panel of archaic carving. The wooden doors which secure both entrances of the first court are of immense size, heavily barred, and embossed with silver ring plates of great age.

At the opposite end of the court an open door communicates with the second court, revealing a bright mass of hollyhocks, snapdragon and stocks, vivid in the sun. The sanctity of the temple obviously increased as we ventured into this inner court. Its sides are honeycombed by small dark chambers apparently built in the thickness of the enormous wall. Each is an

idol crowded sanctuary. Into these obscure shrines one stumbles, bent almost double to avoid the dirt of the low greasy lintel. Once inside, the eye requires some time to distinguish anything more than the dim outlines of an altar in the middle of the chamber. On it stands one or two copper or brass bowls, filled high with butter, each bearing on its half congealed surface a dimly burning wick in a little pool of self-thawed oil.

These dim beads of yellow light provide all the illumination of the cave, and after a little one can just distinguish the solemn images squatting round the walls, betrayed by points and rims of light, reflected here and there from the projections and edges of golden draperies or features. The smell is abominable. The air is exhausted and charged with rancid vapors. Everything one touches drips with grease. The fumes of burning butter hang in the course of many generations filmed over the surfaces and clogged the carving of the doors and walls alike. The floor under foot is slippery as glass. Upon this receptive foundation the grime and reek of centuries have steadily descended, with results that may be imagined.

Except that the images themselves apparently receive from time to time a perfunctory wipe with a greasy rag, which is generally to be found in a conspicuous place beside a Tibetan altar, there is not in one of these numerous chapels the slightest sign of consideration, respect or care.

At the eastern end of the cathedral lies the holy of holies. It is here that the Jo itself is found.

The first sight of what is beyond question the most famous idol in the world is uncannily impressive. In the darkness it is at first difficult to follow the lines of the shrine which hold the god. One only realizes a high-pillared sanctuary in which the gloom is almost absolute, and therein, thrown into strange relief against the obscurity, the soft gleam of the golden idol which sits enthroned in the center. Before him are rows and rows of great butter lamps of solid gold, each shaped in curious resemblance to the preformation chalices of the English church. Lighted by the tender radiance of these twenty of thirty beads of light, the great glowing mass of the Buddha softly looms over ghostlike and shadowless, in the murky recess.

It is not the magnificence of the statue that is first perceived, and certainly it is not that which makes the deepest and most lasting impression. For this is no ordinary representation of the master. The features are smooth and almost childlike; beautiful they are not, but there is no need of beauty here. Here is no trace of that inscrutable smile which from Mukden to Ceylon is inseparable from our conceptions of the features of the great teacher. Here there is nothing of the saddened smile of the Melancholia who has known too much and has renounced it all a vanity. Here, instead is the quiet happiness and the quick capacity for pleasure of the boy who has never yet known either pain or disease or death. It is Gautama as a pure and eager prince, without a thought for the morrow or a care for today.

The priceless image was given by the king of Magadha to the Chinese emperor for his timely assistance when the Yavams were winning the plains of India. From Peking it was brought as her dowry by Princess Konjo in the seventh century, and the innumerable golden ornaments which heap the Khil-kor before the image or the presents of pious Buddhists from the earliest days to the present time.

These are arranged on the three shelves of the Khil-kor, and the tall articles conceal the whole of the image from his shoulders downward. To this fact may perhaps be due the common, but mistaken, description of the Jo as a standing figure. Across and across his breast are innumerable necklaces of gold set with turquoise, pearls and diamonds. The throne on which he sits has over-head a canopy supported by two exquisitely designed dragons of silver-gilt, each about ten feet in height. Behind him is the panel of conventional wooden foliage, and the "Kyung," or Garuda bird, overhead can just be seen in the darkness. Closer examination shows that almost every part of the canopy and seat is gilded, gold or jeweled.

The crown is perhaps the most interesting jewel. It is a deep coronet of gold, set round and round with turquoise and heightened by five conventional leaves, each enclosing a golden image of Buddha, and incrustated with precious stones. In the center below the middle leaf, is a flawless turquoise, six inches long and three inches wide, the largest in the world.

Above on the second floor, is an image which after the Jo itself, is the most important treasure of the Jo-Kang contains. In the southeastern corner of this story is the armory, where the walls and pillars alike are loaded with ancient and grotesque instruments of war. From this room a low, narrow passage leads down half a dozen stone steps into a small dungeon, where the statue of the guardian goddess, Palden-Lhasmo, is worshipped. This is a most amazing figure. The three-eyed goddess crowned with skulls, grins affably with mother-of-pearl teeth from her altar; upon her head and breast are jewels which the Jo himself might condescend to wear. Eight large, square charm boxes of gold and gems, two pairs of gold set turquoise earrings, each half a foot in length, and a diamond studded fillet on the brow beneath the crown, are perhaps the most conspicuous ornaments. Her breast-plate, of turquoise and corals is almost hidden by necklaces, and a huge irregular pearl, strongly resembling the Dudley jewel in shape, is at last distinguishable in the center leaf of her crown. Before her burn butter lamps, and a brown nimble swarm fearlessly over walls, and the floor and altar, so tame that they did not seem being stroked on the lap of the goddess herself.

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COMMON SENSE ESSENTIAL

(From Rev. Charles Wagner's Book.)
Common sense—do you not find what is designated by that name is becoming as rare as the sensible customs of other days? Common sense is an old story. We must have something new—something else—and we seek it in impossible places. It is a refinement that the vulgar would not understand how to procure, and it is so agreeable to sense to distinguish one's self. Instead of conducting ourselves as a natural person would who uses the clearly indicated means at his disposal, we reach the most astonishing singularities by the force of genius. They would prefer to be off the track than follow the simple line. All the bodily defects and deformities treated by orthopedics give but a feeble idea of the bumps, the twistings, the dislocations we have inflicted upon ourselves in order to escape from the common sense of the world. We compare it to good that one does not deform oneself with impunity. Novelty is, after all ephemeral. There is nothing durable but the eternal commonplace, and if one turns aside it is to seek the most dangerous adventures. Happy is he who is able to return and learn to become simple again. Good simple common sense, is not as some think, the inborn property of the first comer, a vulgar and trivial baggage which costs no labor to anyone. It compares it to care of his sword, for fear it might be bent or rusted. How much more should he take care of his thought!

But let us understand this well. An appeal to good sense is not to such thought as grovels to earth, to a narrow positivism which denies everything it cannot see or touch. For that is also a lack of good sense, to wish that man should be absorbed in his material sensation, and to forget the high realities of the inner life. Here we touch a painful subject, around which the greatest problems of humanity are being agitated. In fact, we are striving to attain to a conception of life. We are seeking it amid a thousand obscurities and pains, and all that touches upon the spiritual realities becomes daily more agonizing. In the midst of the grave perplexities and the momentary disorders which accompany great crises of thought, it seems more than ever difficult for man to free himself from the affair with a few simple principles. Yet necessarily comes to our aid as it were the domain of all times. The programme of life is terribly simple, after all, and in the fact that existence is so pressing and that it is imposed on one, it gives us notice that it precedes the idea that we can form for ourselves, and that no one can wait to live until he has first understood, philosophies, our explanations, our beliefs, and it is this actual accomplished fact, prodigious and irrefutable, which recalls us to order when we would deduct the life of our reasonings, and wait to act until we shall have first had philosophy. It is this fortunate necessity which hinders the world from stopping while man is in doubt as to his road. Travelers of a day, we are carried along in a vast movement to which we are called to contribute, but which we have not foreseen nor embraced in its entirety, nor soured in its deepest depths. Our part consists in filling faithfully the position of private soldier, which has fallen to us, and our thought should adapt itself to the situation. Do not say that we live in more trying times than did our ancestors, for that reason from afar is often badly seen, and besides it is bad grace to complain of not having been born in one's grandfather's time. What one may think the least contestable on this subject is this: Since the world began it is troublesome to see it clear. Everywhere and always to think justly has been difficult.

The ancients have no privilege in that above the moderns. And we may add that there is no difference between men when one reaches a point where they can be considered from that point of view. Whether a man obeys or commands, teaches or learns, holds a pen or a hammer, it costs him the same to fully discern the truth. The few lights that humanity acquires in its advancement are doubtless of great utility, but they also aggrandize the number and extent of the problems. The difficulty is never removed, the intelligence always meets with the obstacle. The unknown dominates us and draws us to every side. But as one does not need to exhaust all the water of the spring to stanch one's thirst, one does not need to know everything to live. Humanity lives and has always lived on some elementary provisions.

We will try to indicate them. First of all, humanity lives by confidence. In fact, that it but reflects, commensurate with its conscious thought, that which is the hidden foundation of all beings. An imperturbable faith in the stability of the universe, and its intelligent ordering, sleeps in everything that exists. The flowers, the trees, the animals all live in calm strength and an entire security. There is confidence in the rain that falls, in the morning, in the brook running to the sea. All that which is seems to be. I am; therefore I should be. There are good reasons for that, let us be assured.

So, too, mankind lives by confidence. For the reason that it is bears in itself the reason sufficient for his be-

ing, a pledge of assurance. He rests in the power that has willed that he should be. It is to guard this confidence and not allow it to be shaken by anything, and on the contrary to cultivate it and render it more evident of our thought should tend. Because from that is born tranquil energy, purposeful action, love of life and fruitful labor. Deeply seated confidence is the mysterious spring which sets in motion the energy within us. It nourishes us, it is by that that man lives, much more than by the bread he eats. Thus everything that shakes this confidence is evil-poison and not food.

"M. Le Colonel Bryan"
Not long ago there appeared in a paper published in the south of France an amusing account of the life and exploits of Colonel Bryan that no doubt this gentleman fully enjoyed, says the American Philippine Review. The story was written by the Paris correspondent of a country paper. It is based so the writer says, on information he got from friends of Mr. Bryan who are prominent in Paris. From western we learn that the Frenchman with startling information, and how he must have smiled when there appeared the following in cold print: "M. le Colonel Bryan first came into fame as one of the strangest half-savage band of cow boys who roamed over the far west, fighting the Indians and wild beasts. Imitating, perhaps, the custom of the Indian chiefs, each of the cowboys bore a nickname based on some of his exploits as a hunter and fighter. Thus M. le Colonel Bryan's title among his rough but brave and sturdy comrades was 'Siler Bill, the Dead Shot. After the treaty of peace was signed with the Indians at Chicago in 1896, Colonel Bryan went out of the cattle business and became one of the bonanza farmers of the west. He can now sit on his back stoop, as the rear veranda is called in America, and look over his fields of corn stretching farther than the eye can reach in every direction. As a result of his early training on the plains where he spent months at a time without an opportunity of talking to another human being, the former candidate for president is extremely taciturn, and can hardly be persuaded to express his opinion on the issue of a campaign. He is the author of a book of adventure called "The First Battle," in which some of the encounters with the Indians of the Tammany and other tribes are described at length.

"In the effort to partially neutralize the strength of M. le Colonel among the cowboys and Indians who make up the largest part of the voting population west of the Alleghany mountains, the Republicans have M. Roosevelt is one of the leading cowboys of America and is especially famous for once having vanquished a grizzly bear in a single combat. Roosevelt has ridden a series of horses all over the country, giving exhibitions of rough riding such as were seen in Paris, a year or more ago, under the direction of another American statesman."

Cape Cod Fishermen
(From the Boston Globe.)
Because two fishermen seeking quahogs lost their bearings in a fog the towns of Orleans, Westfield and Eastham are made richer each year to the extent of more than \$30,000. For years the fishermen sought only quahogs only when there was nothing else to do. Two brothers pushed off the Orleans shore bent on getting as many quahogs as possible, seeing in this the only way to avoid disappointment to the loved ones at home. The men became lost in the fog, and in despair threw over the anchor. They knew by the depth that they were far from where they usually fished.

In desperation one threw over his ruke, and when it came up it contained more than the men had ever taken in by one raking. Time and again this was repeated until before night the boat was filled. As the fog cleared they made for home, having first taken their bearings. When the men landed they told their fellow fishermen of their luck, and today 100 boats, carrying nearly 300 men, are daily employed on these grounds, which seem to have an inexhaustible supply. The bed runs parallel with the shore line of Orleans, Eastham and Westfield and is a mile and a half from shore. It is two miles long by a mile wide. On an average the men take three or four barrels a day. This could be exceeded, but restrictions have been imposed by the towns officials.

The bottom is covered with a substance, not unlike red coral, and under this the quahogs lie. To take them the coral substance must be broken, which is the hard work about the business. All of the catch of the summer is not marketed at once, but a good portion is held in on flats near the shore and kept until winter when better prices can be obtained.

Won in Spite of Poor Clothes
(From the New York American.)
Samuel H. Elrod, the Republican governor-elect of South Dakota, was born in Indiana 46 years ago, and has resided in Dakota for 22 years. He is a lawyer by profession, but dresses like a well-to-do farmer. His clothing was made a target by the opposition at the opening of the campaign.

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