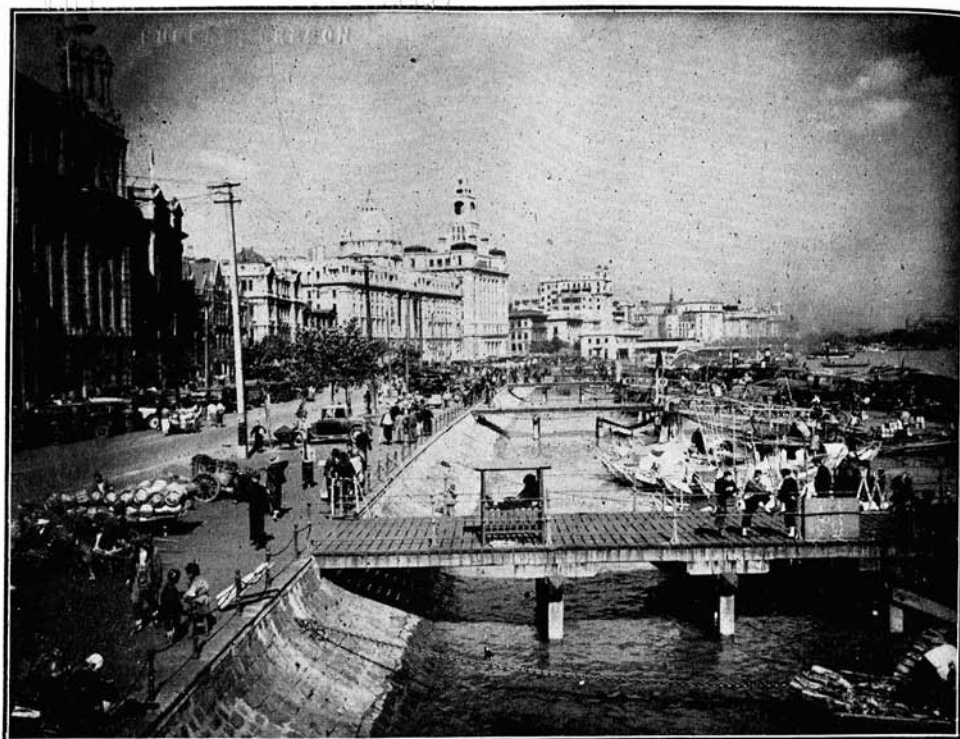




**E-ASIA**  
university of oregon libraries

<http://e-asia.uoregon.edu>



THE BUND OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT  
SHANGHAI.

*Photo by Courtesy of  
Mactavish and Co.*



VOL. VII

NOVEMBER 1927

No. 5

## THE SHANGHAI OF THE FUTURE

BY

ARTHUR DE C. SOWERBY

Is Shanghai doomed? This is a question we sometimes hear asked, and there are always pessimists amongst us who will reply that the future is gloomy, fraught with nothing but difficulty, that sooner or later the foreign concessions and settlements will revert to the Chinese and that decay and rot will set in, destroying this fair city and the work of its founders and builders. Fortunately such pessimists are comparatively few, and the real spirit of the place is an irrepressible optimism.

The visitor coming up the Whangpoo for the first time is always struck by the brave front Shanghai presents to the world and agreeably surprised by the array of magnificent buildings along the Bund of the International Settlement. There they stand, those stately edifices, each in turn marking an epoch in the building history of this great port; each something better and more ambitious than anything that went before. There are the Yangtze building the Yokohama Specie Bank, the North-China Building and the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, each dwarfing its predecessors, and, finally, to cap them all, the stupendous new Customs House. What an array they make, this wonderful efflorescence on the banks of the muddy Whangpoo. What do they not tell of man's industry and ingenuity, of his striving ever upward to something greater and higher and better than all that has gone before. Allowing his gaze to wander up and down and across the river, the visitor beholds stretching in every direction a solid front of buildings—godowns, business premises, factories, wharves, docks—and a host of ships of all kinds, forests of masts where countless junks lie anchored in serried rows off the native city of Nantao, unbroken rows of steamers lining either bank

as far as the eye can see, innumerable smaller craft, such as launches, barges, motorboats, sampans, dotting the surface of the water, and all up and down the river huge vessels, merchantmen and men-of-war, lying at anchor or moored to buoys, the whole complex—factories, hong, dockyards, wharves and shipping—centering on the International Settlement that has called it into being, owing its very existence to the enterprise that developed this great port and city from a mere mud flat, peopled with crabs, frogs, water-snails and wading birds, and overgrown with reeds and rushes and the green slime and scum of the marshes.

Such a view is bound to conjure up dreams of the future. If the past has been such a glorious achievement, what will not the future be? Such energy and industry, such enterprise cannot have been born to die: the mind refuses to picture such a city in decay; it is too alive, too vital and real a thing to rot. The spirit of the men who raised it from the dismal black ooze and who have converted a tidal creek into a harbour for the largest ocean going steamers and the mightiest men-of-war is still alive and will not allow this great port to slip back into oblivion.

Let us jump forward a decade or so, perhaps not so far, and see the Shanghai of the future. Great things have taken place. Race antagonism and divergence of opinions and interests have disappeared. The saner elements in the respective communities have gained the upper hand, and, sinking all party and factional interests, have brought about a mutually satisfactory amalgamation of the different areas, Nantao, the French Concession, the International Settlement, Pootung, Chapei and Woosung, and have welded them into a solid, homogeneous whole—the Greater Shanghai of our dreams.

The Greater Shanghai, stretching from above Lunghua, possibly even from Minghong, to Woosung, on the Pootung side extending to the sea, and northward reaching to the banks of the Yangtze River itself. Previously the greatest and most important city of Asia, it has now in very truth become the London of the Far East, the New York of the Orient, ranking in the world only next to these great cities.

The Greater Shanghai, a free city like Hamburg or Dantzig, safe from the threat of war and the illicit extortions of grasping militarists, free to develop along its destined path, the port for the great Yangtze Basin—half of China, Eastern Tibet, Chinese Turkestan and a great part of Central Asia.

There are larger edifices, even, than the new Customs House, fine roads radiate into the country in all directions, railways also and tram lines. Fleets of fast motor-launches run from Shanghai to all parts of the great Yangtze Delta, intersected, as it is, by a network of navigable creeks and waterways. Places like Chapu and Kangpu have become fashionable seaside resorts, while a road runs along the top of the sea wall following the whole coast from Woosung to Hangchow.

There are universities and colleges for all nationalities: there are fine museums and art galleries, great libraries, magnificent theatres and music halls.

Beyond the old confines of the town are great parks surrounded by handsome mansions and suburban residences. The streets have been



The North-China Building on the Bund, Shanghai,  
where "The China Journal" is printed.



Photos by Courtesy of Martavish & Co.  
The China United Building, Bubbling Well Road,  
Shanghai.

widened and every morning from every direction come pouring in a stream of motor cars such as now passes down Bubbling Well and Nanking Roads. There are no narrow, congested streets like Szechuen, Kiangse and Honan Roads. These have been widened to form great main thoroughfares; and they do not end at the confines of the present settlements, but continue on into Chapei or Nantao, as the case may be, just as wide, clean and smooth as in the old Settlement area. The hundreds of little shops that once existed have given place to more pretentious buildings. The back alleys, where once lived the swarms of poorer Chinese, regular warrens, where the underworld dwelt, and where the police hardly dared venture, are now streets, and in the place of the wretched tenement houses are respectable shops and offices. Such things as slums do not exist; the city fathers and property owners have devised schemes for housing the masses in decency, in some cases rebuilding the dwellings in the congested areas on more commodious lines, in others establishing model villages beyond the city confines and providing cheap and rapid means of transport to carry the people to and from their work.

There is a highly efficient police force, as well as a well organized defence force, consisting mainly of Chinese under the leadership of trained Chinese and foreigners.

And the harbour—what of the harbour? The work of the Conservancy has borne fruit. Shipping now passes up and down the Whangpoo without danger: there are no mud flats and shoals. From Woosung to Lunghua and even beyond the river front has been bunded and along the greater part of it and on both sides are wharves and docking places for the largest steamers. No steamers have to lie at anchor in the middle of the fairway.

The population has increased to double and treble what it once was, and to feed this great mass of people the whole world is drawn upon. Of course, a lot of the food is supplied from neighbouring parts of China herself, as well as from market gardens that surround the city, but for the most part it has been found more economical to bring it in bulk from other countries.

This in turn has created a further demand in the interior of China for foreign produce, and the whole of this trade pours through Shanghai, as also does all the vast export trade from the interior, making Shanghai the greatest port of exchange in the world.

Shanghai now imports raw material and manufactures many of the things it needs. Meanwhile its silk and cotton industries have developed enormously, huge quantities of both raw material and manufactured goods being exported. The manufacture of soap, chemicals, leather and furniture has greatly increased and a thousand other industries incidental to every great city have come into being.

And so we could go on with our dream. It is not an impossible dream: the potentialities are all here. All that is needed is the will to bring about these things, the spirit to combine our efforts, to sink our differences and work together, Chinese and foreigners side by side, working out the destiny of this great city and making a living reality of its adopted motto, *Comitas Inter Gentes*.