

## THE TRAVELLER'S HANDBOOK FOR CHINA

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THE TRAVELLER'S HANDBOOK FOR CHINA. By **CARL CROW**, with 8 Maps and Plans and 32 Illustrations. Shanghai: Hwa-Mei Book Concern. 1913. \$2:50.

Nothing is more difficult than to write a good guide for travellers in China and we do not think that Mr. **Carl Crow** has been very successful. A lot of information has been thrown together in his book, but there is far too large a proportion of ill-digested fact and careless writing. The following statements (to which many others might be added) are specimens of the kind of information that no "Handbook" worthy of the name should contain:

"The foreigner who knows only English will have no difficulty in finding his way about, for "pidgin" or "business" English is spoken in nearly all parts of the country and one will pick up a knowledge of this hybrid language within the first few days of his stay. Except for the missionaries, very few foreign residents ever learn the Chinese language, which is different in every province and in almost every community. The Chinese traveller, when he leaves his own home, has but little advantage over the foreign traveller, for he will probably be compelled to use

pidgin English instead of his own provincial dialect" (p.2 and, in a shorter form, on p. 12).

On page 8 we are told that 1 candareen is equal to 10 Chinese cash, and that "the national currency of China consists of lumps of silver, known as 'sycee.'"

On page 41, when describing China's trouble with France in 1884, it is stated that "the French fleet quietly entered the *Bay* at Foochow and, once inside, opened fire on the Chinese fleet which was lying at anchor."

With similar carelessness we are informed that the foreign population of Hongkong flees to the top of the "*cliff*" in the summer "to escape the wet heat of the lower lauds." Also that in the Hongkong harbour many thousands of lives were lost in the typhoon of 1874. "But warnings of these disturbances are now sent out by the *Jesuits at Siccawei*, greatly decreasing the danger." We wonder what the Director of the Hongkong Observatory will say to this. And what about the many destructive typhoons since 1874?

Ancestor worship is referred to (p.55) and this astonishing statement is made: "Each *home* includes a *temple*, in which memorial tablets are enshrined."

Two tit-bits about Shanghai are the following: "The restaurants [in Foochow Road] will be thronged with Chinese at dinner parties, which often extend over 60 or 70 courses and cost \$5 to \$10 a *plate*." "Several times a year horse dealers arrive in Shanghai with cargoes of shaggy Mongolian ponies which they bought for a *few dollars each* in Mongolia and sell for many times that price to members of the Race Club."

Some of the above sentences might be passed over as mere slips of the pen if other parts of the book showed that the author had taken his work seriously. We have read every page in order to do justice to the book and we can but think that the descriptions of places which travellers are invited to see are altogether too meagre. Information exists in abundance and Mr. **Crow** would have been wiser had he spent a little more time in sifting and arranging his facts, and wiser still had he waited till he could have given us more first-hand information.

For example, Mukden is a city that many travellers are likely to visit. It is on the main line of travel from Europe: it has a history and characteristics of its own, and it is, as the author states, "the ancient seat of the Manchu dynasty and the largest city of Manchuria." Now what are we told about this place so full of interest for tourists? A ten-lined paragraph describes the three divisions of the city and the three walls. Its history under the Manchus and its places and points of interest are summed up in nineteen and a half lines and we are seriously told that "the Manchu Imperial clan have kept the Mukden palaces in repair," at which statement any one who knew Mukden ten years ago will smile. To the city itself three lines are given, six lines to its recent history, and five lines to its trade, and in these last lines travellers are told that furs—sable, ermine, and arctic-fox—can be secured at "exceptionally cheap prices." We once purchased a dog skin in Mukden and found afterwards that we could have got it cheaper in Shanghai!

Although city after city, and port after port are described, we have found only three references to missionary work. On page 99 the institutions and observatory at Siccawei are referred to; on page 168 six lines are given to the missionary institutions in Tsinanfu, and on page 192 mention is made of Robert Morrison's grave at Macau and of his translations of the Bible. Not a word is given to the great work of missions at any of the other places that are described for the benefit of the traveller. Yet one would have supposed that to some travellers at least, however interesting it might be to know that the trade of Mukden, for example, was "chiefly in beans," it might be of equal interest to other travellers to be told that flourishing Christian Missions existed in the city, and that the hospital, the medical college, the theological and the art schools would well repay a visit.

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