

**RECOLLECTIONS OF
LIFE IN
THE FAR EAST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649330652

Recollections of Life in the Far East by W. S. Wetmore

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

W. S. WETMORE

**RECOLLECTIONS OF
LIFE IN
THE FAR EAST**

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

LIFE IN THE FAR EAST,

BY

W. S. WETMORE.

SHANGHAI:

PRINTED AT THE "NORTH-CHINA HERALD" OFFICE.

1894.

CONTENTS.

	PAGES.
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BATTLE OF MUDDY FLAT ...	1-11
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CAPTURE AND OCCUPATION OF THE NATIVE CITY OF SHANGHAI BY THE TRIAD REBELS	12-24
RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE IN CHINA IN THE FIFTIES ...	25-34
RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE IN THE FAR EAST IN THE FIFTIES	35-47
THE EAST IN THE FIFTIES	48-60



RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE
BATTLE OF MUDDY FLAT.

WHY, or by whom, this incident was so called I have never heard. The site where it occurred was not then, nor has it since been known by that name. In a book recently published by a Shanghai resident it is said it was because the fight took place under the city walls and in mud ankle deep, but the scene of the action was not under the city walls, and the ground was perfectly dry. In Mr. Maclellan's "Story of Shanghai" it is stated that the affair was over in two hours, but it really occupied more than twenty-four hours, having commenced on the afternoon of the 3rd, and terminated on the evening of the 4th of April, 1854.

As the above allusions, and others that have from time to time appeared in the local papers and elsewhere, show that there is a general misconception as to many of the facts connected with the incident, it may perhaps be of interest to the present residents of Shanghai if I, who happened to be a participant in it from beginning to end, give my recollections in regard to it; and I hope I shall be pardoned if the narration is made up largely of my own personal experiences, and of what came under my own observation, as of these I am best qualified to speak.

The native city was then, and had been since the previous September, in the occupation of the Triad rebels. The Government soldiers, called "Imperialists," had closely invested the city on all sides except the Foreign Settlement, which the Treaty Consuls would not suffer them to occupy, and, as supplies of food and munitions continued to reach the rebels through this unguarded channel, this naturally created unpleasant relations between the native soldiery and foreigners.

The head-quarters of the Imperialists were at the Red Joss-house above the Stone Bridge on the Soochow Creek, and a line of strong earthworks and fortified camps extended from Tunkadoo on the south side of the city, and parallel with its walls, to the Ningpo Joss-house on the north-west, where there was a formidable mud fort, and thence, crossing the Defence Creek, continued, on its western bank, along the edge of the present Race Course about half way to the site of the Horse Bazaar.

At that time the Settlement extended only to the Honan Road on the west, the interval between that and the Defence Creek being mostly open country, with an occasional hamlet here and there and a few missionary residences; the old Race Course, which skirted the eastern bank of the Defence Creek, occupying a considerable portion of the space.

Owing to the unfriendly relations between the Chinese forces and foreigners above referred to, the latter were literally hemmed in by the lines of investment, and it was dangerous to venture beyond them. The walks of residents were therefore chiefly limited to a turn around the Race Course, and, as in passing that portion along the Defence Creek they were often pelted with bricks and other missiles by the Chinese behind the earthworks, even that had to be abandoned by all except a few of the most daring. Things went on in this way for some time, the peace of the Settlement being frequently disturbed by inroads of lawless soldiers, who on one occasion were fired upon and driven out by the residents in the neighbourhood. Alarms occasioned by these incursions, and by the fighting going on between the rebels and Imperialists were of such constant occurrence that, all the men in the Settlement held themselves in readiness to turn out at a moment's notice to repel invaders.

Such was the condition of matters, when, on the afternoon of the 3rd April, word was brought in that an attack had been made by the soldiery in the vicinity of the Race Course on an English lady and gentleman who were out for a walk, and that they had been badly wounded. I, with several other residents armed with rifles, at once started for the scene of the outrage, and, on reaching what is now the head of the Maloo, saw parties of the Imperial soldiers, extending from the site of the Horse Bazaar in the direction of the present Gas Works, waving their flags and slowly advancing in a defiant attitude. We joined the four or five English marines on picket duty, who were sheltered by a large circular grave mound about where the junction of the Lloyd and Ningpo Roads now is, and were exchanging shots with the advancing Imperialists. There we remained for half an hour or more without any material accession to our numbers (as at that time of the day most of the residents were out for their afternoon exercise, and some delay took place in communicating with the men-of-war in port), when, as the Imperialists were pushing their left towards the site of the present jail, it looked as if they were trying to cut off our retreat. The situation began to be decidedly unpleasant, as, if we continued to remain under cover there seemed to be a strong chance that we should be captured, while a movement to the rear involved the possibility of being hit by some of the bullets which were flying pretty freely. I had nearly made up my mind to the latter alternative, when the rap, tap, tap of drums was heard in the direction of the Settlement, and soon a column of marines and sailors from the English men-of-war came in sight, followed by a number of Americans with a small howitzer of Mr. E. Cunningham's. The appearance of these reinforcements brought a feeling of unspeakable relief to our beleaguered party, and caused the Imperialists to draw rapidly back towards their head-quarters on the Soochow Creek. Thither they were followed for part of the way by the English force accompanied by the British Consul, Mr. Alcock, while the Americans threw a few shells into the camps on the other side of the Defence Creek to the left, when, darkness coming on, all returned to the Settlement and quiet prevailed during the night.

Early the next morning operations were resumed by Captain O'Callaghan of H.B.M.S. *Encounter*, who sent an armed force in boats to capture and bring under his guns a number of West Coast war junks that were anchored opposite the Old Dock. As, however, there was a favouring wind and tide, the junks did not wait to be caught, but cut their cables and came sailing in beautiful style to the mouth of the Soochow Creek, up which they managed to get in safety in spite of a brisk fire from the *Encounter's* guns. I chanced to be on the Bund, opposite the present entrance to the British Consular grounds, and as that steamer was anchored off the P. & O. premises, I had a fine view of the whole affair, though her shot came perilously near. Of course all business was suspended, and in the forenoon the Treaty Consuls held a consultation with the naval commanders, when it was decided that a demand should be sent to the Chinese General-in-chief insisting on the withdrawal of his soldiers from the vicinity of the Settlement, and informing him that, failing a compliance with this, an attack would be made upon his position at four o'clock by all the available foreign forces. The result of this consultation was rapidly disseminated throughout the Settlement, and all the able-bodied single men, as well as some who were married, responded to the call for muster in front of the Church at 3 p.m. The line was formed in the Kiangse Road, and extended nearly from the Nanking to the Hankow Road. First came marines and bluejackets from H.B.M.'s ships *Encounter* and *Grecian*, with a field-piece; then the infantry Volunteers under Mr. T. F. Wade, H.B.M.'s Vice-Consul, about 200 men in all. Next the American party of marines and sailors from the U.S. sloop-of-war *Plymouth*, with one brass gun; a score or more of sailors from some of the merchant vessels, and volunteers residents, some in charge of Mr. Cunningham's howitzer, and the rest armed with rifles, in all about 100 men. The English force was commanded by Captain O'Callaghan, with Lieut. Roderick Dew second in command, and accompanied by Mr. R. Alcock, H.B.M.'s Consul. The Americans were led by Captain Kelly of the U.S. sloop *Plymouth*, with Lieut. John Guest second in command, and accompanied by Mr. R. C. Murphy, U.S. Consul.

At about half-past three the column started with drums beating and colours flying, and we marched up the line of the Maloo which was then but a narrow roadway through the fields. Arrived at the point where the Hupeh Road (which was then the eastern side of the Race Course) cuts the Maloo, a halt was ordered, to await the reply of the Chinese General-in-chief to the despatch which had been sent by the Consuls in the morning. The general opinion was that, if he had been in doubt before, the rather formidable demonstration we were making would induce him to yield to the Consular demands and withdraw his troops to a point further in the interior, and that we would simply have to march back as we had marched out. A few moments, however, decided the matter, as word passed rapidly along the line that a courier had arrived from head-quarters, and soon it was known that the General refused to move his forces. At this intelligence there was a marked decline in the exuberance which had characterised the march out, and faces generally assumed a much more serious look, and I have no doubt most of the company wished themselves well out of it. As for myself, after the experience of the previous day, I must confess that I did not feel eager for the fray, but the word was given to advance and there was no holding back. The force then divided into two portions: the English went straight on, and took up a position in a little grove of firs which stood at the end of the Maloo, opposite what is now the Lloyd Road. The Americans turned to the left, following the Race Course along what are now Hupeh and Pakhoi Roads until they reached a point on the Course near the present Polytechnic building. Here we came in full view of the long line of Chinese entrenchments, their parapets decked with innumerable flags which fluttered gaily in the breeze, and one could hardly realise that instead of these gaudy preparations having been made for some brilliant fête at which we were to assist, as their appearance might betoken, they were indications of hostility and defiance. At this point our little band came to a halt, the guns were unlimbered and prepared for action, and we who had rifles were sent out to occupy a position to the left and act as sharpshooters, for which duty the ground was well adapted, being covered with mounds. My post happened to be on the