



Two Years in the Forbidden City

The Princess Der Ling

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Purchase one of 1st World Library's Classic Books and help support our free internet library of downloadable eBooks. 1st World Library-Literary Society is a non-profit educational organization. Visit us online at www.1stWorldLibrary.ORG - MY father and mother, Lord and Lady Yu Keng, and family, together with our suite consisting of the First Secretary, Second Secretary, Naval and Military Attaches, Chancellors, their families, servants, etc., - altogether fifty-five people, - arrived in Shanghai on January 2, 1903, on the S.S. "Annam" from Paris, where for four years my father had been Chinese Minister. Our arrival was anything but pleasant, as the rain came down in torrents, and we had the greatest difficulty getting our numerous retinue landed and safely housed, not to mention the tons of baggage that had to be looked after. We had found from previous experience that none of our Legation people or servants could be depended upon to do anything when travelling, in consequence of which the entire charge devolved upon my mother, who was without doubt the genius of the party in arranging matters and straightening out difficulties. When the launch from the steamer arrived at the jetty off the French Bund, we were met by the Shanghai Taotai (the highest official in the city), the Shanghai Magistrate and numerous other officials, all dressed in their official robes. The Taotai told my father that he had prepared the Tien Ho Gung (Temple of the Queen of Heaven) for us to reside in during our stay in Shanghai, but my father refused the offer, saying that he had telegraphed from Hong Kong and made all arrangements to go to the Hotel des Colonies in the French Concession. We had had previous experience staying in this temple while on our way to Japan, where my father went as Minister in 1895, and did not care to try it a second time. The building is very old and very much out of repair. It was a beautiful place in its prime, but had been allowed to go to rack and ruin. The custom is that the magistrate has to find a place and supply the food, etc., for high officials when passing through, and it is not exactly the thing to refuse their kind offer, but my father was always very independent and politely declined all proffers of assistance.

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