

»The Emperor's Road from Peking to Jehol is 418 li long, or 22 German miles, and is fully repaired twice a year. It runs right through the main traffic route, and is ten feet broad, a foot high, and made of a mixture of sand and clay, so evenly damped and so well packed that it becomes as hard as cement. That Emperor's Road is as clean and as smooth as the floor in one of our drawing-rooms. It is constantly swept, not only to remove fallen leaves, but the smallest grain of dust. On either side there are reservoirs, every 200 paces, from whence — often with great trouble — water is carried for damping the road. Probably in the whole world there is not a more beautiful road than this one, when it has been cleaned in readiness for the Emperor's journey to Tartary. Watch-posts are set up along the road and no-one is allowed to step on it until the Emperor has passed.»

Now we could see the town of Jehol<sup>1</sup>, and the road became a street. One began to see trees and rickshaws, and the houses and shops were closer together. We passed one *p'ai-lou*, and then another, and the *yamen* with posted sentries. We drove over a stone bridge, and under still another pair of decorative triumphal arches. A bridge in the middle of the town lacked a parapet and was scarcely wide enough to take the car. We passed gaudy shops with multi-coloured sign-boards; stalls that cried out to be sketched with their gesticulating customers; and narrow alleys, teeming with soldiers, playing children, lazy dogs, small blue Peking carts, donkey caravans, horsemen and yelling itinerant merchants.

We stopped at the door of the Belgian Catholic Mission, where we were met by a distinguished and stately gentleman in Chinese dress, Father JOSEPH MULLIE, the head of the mission.

We had covered 190 kilometers from Peking, and were now in the city of Jehol or Ch'eng-teh, as it is properly called, of which the Abbé GROSIER, writing over a hundred years ago, said:

»The most delightful part of all Mongolia is the district of Harchin, which borders on the Great Wall. There the Emperor goes every year to take his pleasure, hunting, and there he generally spends the whole of the summer.

In this district he possesses many pleasure-places, of which the most wonderful is Jehol. This town, which was formerly nothing but an unknown part of Tartary, has K'ANG HSI to thank for the beginning of its renown. Since the days of this monarch the town has grown without cessation, and the embellishments it has received from the late Emperors, the palaces, and the gardens they have laid out, have made a visit to Jehol a delight, especially in the worst summer heat. As a missionary has said, 'Jehol is China's Fontainebleau.' The town is situated in a fertile valley winding among moderately high mountains and watered by a fairly large river, which at times, especially after rains and thaws, can swell to such an enormous extent that it becomes a stream impossible to enclose in any dams.»<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The unfortunate French transcription has been retained, since it is now commonly accepted. The correct form according to the English system otherwise employed is Je-ho, i. e. The Warm River. This river, which is a tributary of the Luan-ho, has given its name to the whole province, which was of old accounted a part of Inner Mongolia (although it, like Chakhar, was included in the province of Chihli); but in 1928 it became a special administrative area under Manchuria. In the following, the name Jehol is used to designate the town near which the temples are situated. F. B.

<sup>2</sup> De la Chine, ou description générale de cet empire. Tome I (Paris 1818), p. 272.