

pigs grunted in its mud. One meets with such domestic animals, for the rest, in most parts of the city. The dirt and the smells in the streets and public places of Peking, however, are a feature that one must learn to overlook.

Our new house was situated just to the east of the Imperial City; but the red wall that marked its boundary had unfortunately been torn down on the east side. This had taken place in 1926—27 at the instigation of the corrupt authorities, who made a profit by selling the excellent Ming bricks of which it was built. Between the foliage of the trees one glimpsed the battlemented wall of the Forbidden City, with its mighty gate-tower and elegant corner pavilions and the yellow-glazed, lofty and deeply curved roofs of the great palace-halls.

During the Mongol dynasty Peking was made into the metropolis that it now is. The greatest representative of the dynasty, KHUBLAI KHAN, created here in the year 1272 a capital for his enormous kingdom that in magnificence and overwhelming splendour is said to have been unequalled. For the Chinese, Peking was then 'Ta-tu, while Westerners better knew the city under the name Khan-baliq, or, as MARCO POLO writes it, Cambaluc.

During the change from the Mongol to the Ming dynasty the greater part of the imperial palaces were destroyed. The first Ming emperor took up his abode in Nanking, but the third, YUNG LO, moved the capital back to Peking; and from 1436 the city retained its rank of capital right up to 1928. YUNG LO reigned between the years 1403 and 1424; and he was the builder who was to set his seal upon the Forbidden City, with its imperial palaces, its ceremonial halls, temples and other wonderful buildings that still remain to-day, dreaming of a vanished greatness. His successors went on building according to the same plan. It was also YUNG LO who planned and began the construction of Peking's present enormous grey city-wall, that within its severe square contains and holds together all the clustering Chinese houses, and forms the ground-pattern for the direction of the streets.

The gold-shimmering tiles of the mighty curving roofs of the many palace-halls in the Forbidden City, the red walls, the white marble terraces and the many white balustrades grouped round wide courts or parks, the idyllic smaller palaces with their intimate courtyards and gaudy decorations — all this is indeed unique in the world and is without doubt the most delightful and enchanting collection of buildings raised by the hand of man. It was for hundreds of years a mystery city. And by the Chinese themselves it was actually regarded as the centre not only of the vast empire but also of the universe.

Like all other cities, Peking has gone through many changes, especially with the rise of modern communications. If one compares the city as it appeared on the occasion of my first visit in 1897 with the picture it presented thirty-three years later one is naturally struck by the many changes both in the street-life and the aspect of the streets themselves. *Then*, people were conveyed in