

They received one of the wings adjoining my courtyard as their quarters; NORIN lived in the other. Their arrival coincided precisely with the expiration of our contract with the Chinese; they had certainly kept to time-table with admirable precision.

CULMINATION OF THE JAPANESE ADVANCE

On the mornings of May 11th and 12th a reconnoitring Japanese airman hovered over Peking. Machine-guns rattled in various parts of the city, and we wondered what was going to happen. BERGMAN's and HUANG's archaeological collections were brought to Sweden House by Professor LIU FU, as it was thought that they would be safer in our quarters in the event of bombing from the air, invasion and looting, than in the university premises.

A few days later leaflets were dropped from the air declaring that if the Nanking troops were not withdrawn bombing would begin.

On May 20th eleven airmen were buzzing very low over us, and the Japanese advance troops were only fifteen kilometers from the city. Parties of fleeing Chinese soldiers crowded into Peking and forced people to give them billets.

On the 22nd we had that excellent American author and traveller OWEN LATTIMORE and his wife to dinner. We were sitting at table when the German Legation rang up Miss LESSING and gave the following instructions:

»If you hear two gun-shots, watch the American Legation's wireless mast. If you see on it three white and three red lights, go at once to the Rockefeller Institute, whence army cars will take you to the American Legation. There is reason to fear that Peking will be looted to-night.»

But the night passed quietly, and no shots were heard. The city gates were now kept shut also during the daytime. All the trains were overflowing with fugitives; but orders had been given for the railways to be handed over entirely to the military authorities. We went for a drive through the northern quarters of the city to look at the barricades in the city gates, and other preparations for defence.

On account of the very critical situation we dared not keep the archaeological collections in our house; and on the forenoon of the 23rd we moved them to the Legation Quarter, where the German Legation obligingly placed premises at our disposal.

The following day negotiations were begun with the Japanese, and as far as Peking was concerned they led, fortunately, to a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Nanking troops evacuated the city, and an armistice was afterwards signed in Tangku. Our collections were then returned to Sweden House, and life in Peking resumed the even tenor of its way. Only the protecting sandbags surrounding the sentries outside the Japanese Legation grew higher from day to day.