

visiting the various units of the Chinese Army. And his tact, his understanding of Chinese etiquette and his conversational ability enabled him to make personal friendships with many of the Viceroys and high officials. So he had a knowledge of Chinese of all degrees, from the soldiers of his Wei-hai-wei Regiment and from peasants and carters to the highest in the land.

Such were Pereira's qualifications for the task he had before him when he arrived in Peking in January 1921. And all this experience he needed. For the obstacles which lay between him and his goal were not so much physical as human. And to overcome human obstacles, capacity for dealing with men is the chief need. The most determined and pertinacious man in the world would never succeed if he had not also the knack of winning over men to his own side.

The first obstacle he would meet would be the famine in North China. Poor China is subject to many calamities. And the great plains of the north are liable to both floods and famine: to floods from an excess of rainfall and to famine from a deficiency. When Pereira planned his journey to Lhasa there had been a deficiency of rainfall. The crops had not matured. The wretched inhabitants were starving. And through a starving population it is not easy for a stranger to find his way.

Famine, however, was not so serious an obstacle as civil war. China was in chaos. One Province was at war with another. And all were more or less at war with the Central Government. The ancient monarchy had been swept away. The