

CHAPTER II

THE START FROM PEKING

FULLY aware of the difficulties which lay before him, but conscious also of his ability to deal with them, Pereira, after a visit to Peking, left Tientsin on February 15, 1921. And wisely he travelled alone—that is to say, alone as regards European companionship. For it is much easier for a solitary European to find his way through such obstacles as he was likely to meet with than for even a couple of Europeans. A single European is viewed with much less suspicion. He may be only a stray lunatic. If there are two there must be some design behind. Moreover, when transport and supplies are difficult to procure, one European is more easily provided for than two. Pereira was, therefore, wise to set out on his journey by himself.

But, of course, he took Chinese servants—"boys"—with him. Each of the two had his bundle of bedding containing all his worldly goods. His wages were to be drawn at the Tientsin bank, and two dollars each a week sufficed for food and other necessities of the way.

It will not be necessary to follow Pereira very closely over the first part of his journey, for he covered well-known ground. He first of all