

round. On one occasion a lady did not do so, and was sent off at a tangent, skimming gracefully along over the ice in one direction, while the boat went off thirty miles an hour in another! Any other form of yachting is tame in comparison with this ice-boat sailing, and its only disadvantage is the cold. Flying through the air with the thermometer not far off zero is very cold work, and necessitates good heavy furs.

During my stay in Tientsin, the Russian New Year fell, and Mr. Brennan took me a round of visits to the Russian consul and the Russian merchants in the place. With them the New Year is observed with great ceremony. At each house we found substantial refreshment laid out on a side-table, and were pressed to drink good luck to the coming year in champagne. The Russians in Tientsin are mostly tea-merchants, and some of them are extremely rich, and live in very luxuriously furnished houses. They all of them had that warm, hearty, cordial manner which is the characteristic of Russians.

After this I went on to Peking, and was entertained in the British Legation, first by Mr. Walter Hillier, then Chinese Secretary, now Consul-General in Corea, and afterwards by Sir John and Lady Walsham. I trespassed far too long on their hospitality, but they were so kind in their reception of me, and it was such a relief to be settled in comfortable home-like surroundings after the rough life I had been leading, that I was unable to break myself away till the spring had come on, and so I was with them for nearly three months. And here, of course, I learnt a great deal about the Chinese which I should certainly never have been able to learn by myself. Mr. Hillier was known to be a fine Chinese scholar, and to have a very intimate knowledge of the Chinese. Conversations with him were therefore especially interesting, and in my subsequent journeys I was able to profit much by the advice he gave me.