

pious old traveller still is with educated Chinamen. Though Tang-Seng, "the monk of the Tang Dynasty," is evidently credited with many wonderful relations for which we should look in vain in his "Description of the Western Countries," this scarcely need disturb our conscience.

On the 22nd of September Liu-Darin insisted on entertaining me at a Chinese dinner. Well-meant as the invitation no doubt was, I confess that I faced the entertainment with mixed feelings. My Kashgar experiences had shown me the ordeal which such a feast represents to the average European. However, things passed better than I had ventured to hope. The dinner consisted of *only* sixteen courses, and was duly absorbed within three hours. It would be unfair to discuss the strange mixture of the menu, especially as I felt quite incompetent to analyse most of the dishes, or the arrangements of the table. Having regard to my deficient training in the use of eating-sticks I was provided with a fork (never changed or cleaned) and a little bowl to eat from. As my host insisted on treating me personally to choice bits, a queer collection accumulated on this substitute for a plate. I felt more comfortable when I managed to get it cleared from time to time. For the hot spirit, a kind of arrack it seemed, served in tiny square cups as the only beverage, there was no such convenient depository, and in reply to the challenges of my convives I had to touch it more frequently than I could have wished. Besides my host, two of his chief officials, jovial-looking men, were keeping me company.

It was a little pathetic when, in the course of dinner, Liu-Darin pressingly inquired as to what news I had about the capture of Peking by the allied forces and the flight of the Emperor. I had no direct news from Europe later than the end of July, and thus could not satisfy his curiosity. So I contented myself with describing the relief with which the safety of the legations had been greeted in Europe. The old "Political" would not credit my ignorance, and attributed my