

## An Incident of the Boxer Movement In China

By JOHN Y. LARNED

Some years ago Hugh Worthington, a young man of fortune, desiring to enter the field of diplomacy, secured an appointment in the service of the United States government at Peking. Worthington was more interested in seeing the country than in his official duties, which were nominal, and he traveled over such parts of China as were open to foreigners. One day he fell in with a mandarin who had been a good deal in England and spoke the language. The mandarin traveled in style, being carried in a chair, common in Europe until near the beginning of the nineteenth century, by two men and attended by several other servants.

Worthington, who traveled on horseback, on joining the mandarin rode beside the chair, chatting with him. The American knew enough of China to understand that it was infested with robbers and was armed to the teeth. The mandarin was an elderly person, unused to arms, but his servants were prepared to defend him. They were armed with pikes, short swords and other weapons, which Worthington considered next to useless in a fight with an enemy properly accoutered.

Suddenly while passing through a narrow cut in the road the party was attacked by a dozen men bent on robbery. They were not much better armed than the mandarin's servants, but they outnumbered the latter, who immediately took to flight, leaving their master in the hands of the enemy.

Worthington drew a revolver from under his coat at each hip and began a fusillade that put the robbers to flight. Upon this the servants returned and humbly begged the master's forgiveness for having deserted him. He was profuse in his thanks to the American, who had not only saved a considerable amount of money for the Chinaman, but his life as well. He begged Worthington to name some favor that he could do him, but the latter said that he wanted for nothing in the world. Then the mandarin took up a bamboo umbrella and opened it. Calling for a writing stick, he wrote on it something as unintelligible to his preserver as the receipt of a Chinese laundryman in America. Handing it to Worthington, he said in a voice so low as not to be heard by his servants: "A time is coming when there will be a movement on the part of our ignorant and superstitious people to rid China of all foreigners. Keep this umbrella and if attacked open it in the face of your would be murderer."

Worthington paid no attention to the man's warning. Every one knew that foreigners were hated by the Chinese, and there had always been talk about the latter being massacred. The American was young, and the young take little thought of danger. But he was too polite not to assure the mandarin that he would keep his gift as a remembrance of him and the episode.

An American named Preston lived in Peking, who operated a banking house which was a branch of one in New York. Worthington spent a good deal of time at his house, attracted by the banker's daughter, Emma Preston. When the Boxer trouble broke out a month after the foregoing episode Worthington was at Preston's house. It was without the regions of the embassies and entirely unprotected. Worthington on the first sign of danger returned to the embassy for leave

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to absent himself for the protection of the family in which he was interested. Having attained it, he was about to start back when he noticed the umbrella given him by the mandarin. The day was very hot and it occurred to him to take it for protection against the sun's rays. As to the words spoken concerning it if attacked by an enemy, he had forgotten them, but he did not forget to take with him a couple of revolvers and a supply of cartridges.

As Worthington approached the Preston home he noticed knots of Chinamen talking together excitedly. Some of them scowled at him, but since they had as much dread as hatred of a "foreign devil," they did not attack him. He reached the Preston home safely, but found the family in great trepidation, expecting that at any time a mob would attack and murder them.

The anticipated trouble occurred the next day. The banker's residence was well known, and a crowd of Chinamen armed with all sorts of implements from a scythe to a razor came down for murder. Worthington knew that, though armed, he could not withstand so large a force; nevertheless he stationed himself at a window over the front door, ready to use up his cartridges.

The howling mass came, stopped before the house and were about to make an onslaught upon it when suddenly all their eyes were cast to a window directly beneath the one Worthington occupied. Then every weapon was lowered, every knife was sheathed and the Chinamen moved on.

Worthington was at a loss to account for this sudden change, but it was soon explained to him. One of the family had caught up his umbrella, as a drowning person will catch at a straw, opened it and held it at a window on the ground floor as a protection against stones that were being thrown in. On it was a message signed by a man to whom the Boxers looked as a commander:

Respect this man and his family and his property

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