



THE CHINESE NESTORIAN MONUMENT
(A. D. 781) AND ITS RESCUER,
MR. FRITS HOLM

The HOLM- NESTORIAN EXPEDITION *to* SIAN-FU

Being the illustrated account of a 2500
mile scientific journey of archæolog-
ic exploration in the interior of
China and its results, as well as
its incidents and accidents,
told by its Chief.

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MANAGEMENT

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CAVE DWELLINGS IN SHENSI, CHINA. MILLIONS OF CHINAMEN LIVE IN SUCH CAVES

Adventures in China During a Year of Archaeologic Exploration



NDER the heading "The exploits of Mr. Frits von Holm" the "Shanghai Times" and other papers in Manila, Hongkong and Singapore, and subsequently the Press of the world, published accounts of the work of the Danish explorer in the far interior of China. An extract reads:

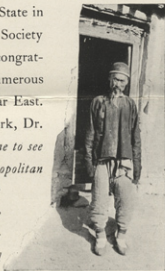
"We mentioned briefly in our last issue that an enterprising young Danish gentleman, Mr. Frits von Holm, had arrived on Monday with the much-discussed replica of the Nestorian Tablet in his possession, and we are sure that every foreign resident in China who is acquainted with the importance and interest attaching to this most venerable monument of a half-forgotten sect of Christianity will unite with us in tendering to the brave and enterprising traveller who, first of all men, has had the hardihood to cause a copy of the famous tablet to be made, and who is now conveying it to a place where Western seekers after Eastern lore can examine the relic and appreciate it at first hand, a hearty expression of congratulation on his very notable achievement. Mr. von Holm's prize, which is an absolutely perfect facsimile of the famous monument, consists of a huge slab of granite, or coarse marble, taken from the same quarry as the

material of the Tablet itself. It measures ten feet in height—and weighs two tons; so that one can well believe Mr. von Holm's statement that its transportation from Sian-fu in Shensi to Hankow, the port of shipment, was a maddening undertaking—.'

The Chinese Nestorian Monument is dated A. D. 781 and was erected by the first Christian missionaries who came to China. They came overland during the sixth century and were permitted to preach under the Tang dynasty, which reigned over China from Sian-fu, the present provincial capital of Shensi in Northwestern China, famed as the place of refuge of the Imperial Court during and after the Boxer troubles in 1900. The monument was accidentally unearthed by Chinese laborers in 1625 and is considered one of the four most important stone monuments of ancient history—the others being: the Rosetta, the Moabite and the Aztec Calendar Stones, now in London, Paris and Mexico City, respectively. The Nestorian inscription, carved in some 2,000 Chinese and Syriac characters, gives the history of the Chaldaean Church in China and expounds the mysteries of the Christian religion.

The two-ton monolithic replica of the Nestorian Monument, which Dr. v. Holm brought to America as the main result of his daring quest, is now placed as a loan in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, where it has attracted much attention from scientists as well as from the public.

Institutions of Learning in many countries have congratulated the Danish explorer, who, according to the editor of "Putnam's Magazine", "speaks English like a native", on the successful termination of his arduous task, during which he all but lost his life through attempted assassination in China. The Smithsonian Institution (U. S. National Museum), the British Museum, the Department of State in Washington, Buda Pesth University and the Royal Asiatic Society in London are among the Institutions that have addressed congratulatory letters to Mr. v. Holm, who has also received numerous other honors and distinctions for his field-work in the Far East. The Professor of Chinese in Columbia University, New York, Dr. Friedrich Hirth, wrote saying: *"It was a great pleasure to me to see the replica of the Nestorian Stone the other day at the Metropolitan Museum. I think the public exhibition of this ancient monument is bound to stimulate the interest in one of the most remarkable chapters in the early history of Christianity. Viewed in this light the scientific value of your expedition to Sian-fu is beyond dispute,——."*



AN INNKEEPER OF NORTHERN CHINA

Various foreign Governments have been anxious to obtain plaster casts of the huge replica with its unique inscription; but the distribution of such reproductions, although most desirable, can not be pushed before the Monument has found a permanent home. The quest cost thousands of dollars, which must be refunded by some patriotic Mæcenas, desirous to enrich an American Museum with this archæological treasure, casts of which may then be widely distributed.

In his lecture, illustrated with 80 rare slides from photographs taken in the interior of China by himself, the Danish traveller gives a brief outline of the history of the Nestorian Tablet, as well as of other Chinese monuments, which he visited; but at the same time he tells a straightforward story of his unusual experiences along the hundreds of miles, traversed by caravan and native houseboat; his difficult negotiations with Chinese mandarins, hostile and otherwise; his trip through the marvellous "*Loess*" regions and among native cave-dwellers; his visit to the Buddha Grottos of Lungmen and to the colony of Chinese Jews at Kaifeng. He has already delivered his lecture in sixteen Universities and Societies, among which Yale, Cornell, New York and the Mexican National Universities as well as the Geographic Societies of Philadelphia and Chicago and the Archæological Institutes in Pittsburg and New York.

Dr. v. Holm, who received an officer's education in the Royal Danish Navy and who is twice a circumnavigator, has spent in all, during two visits, more than four years in the Far East; and, although only twenty-five when he started on his Nestorian mission, has had an uncommonly eventful life.



- (1) SEVEN CHINESE OFFICIALS IN SHENSI
- (2) MR. VON HOLM'S HOUSEBOAT ON THE GRAND CANAL
- (3) UNLOADING CARAVAN CART FROM SCOW ON THE YELLOW RIVER