

## THE CHINESE MISSION.

### WHAT MR. DURLINGAME HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

SIR: I might almost ask, instead, What has he accomplished, within the range of his ministerial duties, that industry and intelligent endeavor could achieve? He found Prince Kung embittered against foreigners because of the wrongs done to China by certain of the Great Powers, and not inclined to show favor to any of them. He has earned the respect and esteem of this "power behind the throne," and used the influence thus acquired to the great advantage of America first, to the advantage of Europe next, and in the interest of Chinese advancement always, both morally and commercially. He found the Embassies of the foreign powers located in an out-of-the-way seaport, and looking more for protection to their own ships of war than to the countenance shown them by the Chinese Government; he found them thus remote from the Emperor's court, and utterly debarred from residing in the capital city. He obtained the extraordinary privilege of removing the American Embassy into the very midst of sacred Peking. Afterward, with characteristic unselfishness, he procured the same privilege for the other foreign embassies. He did more: he induced the Chinese Government to set apart an ample area of ground in Peking whereon to erect embassy buildings, and thus secured the envoys from many an annoyance which they had been familiar with, formerly, when they had existed upon sufferance, and in the shade of the Premier's smile. Through his great influence at the Chinese Court he obtained the enlargement of a treaty which gave to America precisely the commercial privileges which the Embassadors from the European Courts had been striving for years to obtain for their Governments—and immediately he invited them to come in and share these advantages, and took pains to remove every obstacle that was in the way of their being allowed to do so. In return the several Embassadors wrote letters to him in which they set forth that they were indebted to him for the procuring for them of these valuable concessions, which they had sought in vain to procure for themselves, and closed their notes with grateful acknowledgments couched in the warmest language, and with the highest compliments to his ability as a diplomatist.

Again, in prompt response to a note addressed by him to Prince Kung, the despotism of China became the very first of all foreign Governments to do us a friendly justice, and say to the marauding Alabamas of the Confederacy, "China has no favors for Rebels, and no harbors for their ships!" Prince Kung ordered his seaport garrisons to impress that sentiment with cannon and mortar whenever it should chance to become necessary.

Mr. Burlingame, having conquered the prejudices of the Chinese Court against foreigners, has used the advantage thus gained, for the highest benefit of both the Chinese and the foreigners, and always with that thoughtful reference to the far future which marks the statesman. He has induced the Chinese Government to furnish lands, and, in connection with our Government, to establish a college in Peking for the education of Chinese and American youths in the language and commercial customs of the respective countries, to the end that at an early day we may have consuls, clerks, commercial agents, and factors who shall conduct business with the Chinese honestly and intelligently, and without the aid of characterless interpreters and brokers; and to the end, also, that China shall have native clerks, and commercial agents, who shall be entirely qualified to protect her merchants from the shrewd practices of foreign sharpers. This was a wise thought. It looks to the building up of our commercial relations with China upon the lasting basis of intelligence and mutual confidence, and is a loftier policy, and one more becoming the dignity of a great nation than that pursued by Great Britain in India.

Mr. Burlingame persuaded away another Chinese prejudice, and got the Prince to have a geological survey made, so that some idea might be formed of the mineral resources of China. A talented young American made the survey, and the results proved of the highest importance, especially as they demonstrated the presence of large coal deposits there, an article very necessary to satisfactory steam communication with China.

Mr. Burlingame made short work of the regeneration of the American Consulates in China. They are useful auxiliaries of our Government now, instead of shops devoted to trafficking and bartering in the behoof of private and personal consular profit.

But the crowning service performed by Mr. Burlingame in China was his construing and expounding the international law under which China and the envoys conducted their State business. This was a service done in the broad interest of the commerce, the civilization, and the peace and good-will of the world. The foreign Ministers at the Chinese Court had labored long and hard, and individually and collectively, to construe certain tangled clauses in that law in a manner which should be satisfactory to all concerned. But they failed—and continued to fail. Threatening difficulties intruded themselves often, and open ruptures came near resulting on several occasions from diverse opinions as to the meaning of the law. The envoy asked Mr. Burlingame to make an attempt to elucidate the vexed law, and he did so, and with brilliant success. His concise and yet exhaustive construction of the document was cordially and unanimously accepted by the foreign envoys, and also by the Chinese Government, as just, lucid, and in every way satisfactory. They wrote notes to him full of praise of the rare ability he had shown in the matter, and thanking him heartily for the great service thus done themselves and their countries. Considering the distinguished ability of those Embassadors themselves, Mr. Burlingame might well be proud of his achievement.

Mr. Burlingame has added a triumph to his singularly successful career by recently ascending to any man. The foreign ministers at the Chinese court applauded his promotion with one voice, and freely indorsed its wisdom.

He found our mission in China of no more than mere ordinary consequence, but he leaves it far in the lead of all the rest. He leaves our Chinese affairs so situated that with a great-brained successor who shall appreciate the magnitude of the interests at stake and perform the duties of his post with tact and sound judgment the vast commerce of 400,000,000 of industrious people must soon pass to us—and to us alone, almost.

There is an impression in some quarters (or rather there was, when Mr. Burlingame was younger) that he is superficial. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is quick, sagacious, and withal a deep and serious thinker. He is one of the ablest diplomats America has produced, and his works prove it. This will be seen more readily, perhaps, by comparing them with the achievements of our other foreign ministers. He has done his work on the other side of the world, in a newspaperless land—otherwise this nation would have known all about it long ago, and would have freely accorded the praise and the high honor it deserved.

My opportunities for knowing whereof I speak in the above paragraphs were good, unusually good. You have asked me to write down this casual dinner-table talk: I have done so, and am not sorry for the excuse to show the people that the great distinction lately conferred upon a fellow-citizen was earned by hard work, and not stumbled upon by accident. If I have made any mistakes in my statements, I am confident they are errors of no real consequence.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

MARK TWAIN.