

Not used

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Chapter 7 - Dissolution

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After all, it has become an accepted commonplace to hear of large towns and even cities in the interior provinces being raided by bandit gangs, despite the swollen "armies" which are eating the heart out of all the provinces. In the Pearl River Delta region, around Canton, bandit and pirate outrages of an indescribable nature have also become matters of course.

But only within the last year have there been many cases of this kind in the immediate vicinity of Shanghai, or in the area surrounding Shanghai and the seat of government at Nanking.

Most shocking of the raids in this region was the double pillaging and ultimate ruin of the city of Liyang, on Taihu Lake, only forty-five miles south of an important town on the Shanghai-Nanking Railway.

Twice before bandit gangs had raided Liyang, though the city lies supposedly in the heart of the district most firmly controlled from Nanking. But in December of 1929 a well organized bandit gang about 3000 strong conducted a ferocious foray, killing more than 350 men, women, and children, made off with loot worth about \$3,000,000, and by incendiary fires destroyed property worth an additional \$10,000,000.

Liyang is a strongly walled city, and was taken by a ruse. More than 500 of the bandits drifted in by twos and threes, disguised as farmers, and put up at small inns. Late at night these conspirators gathered, overpowered the guards, opened the city gates, and their fellows came swarming into the sleeping and helpless city.

Telegraphic appeals were sent to Nanking, troops were rushed to Liyang, and the bandits were driven out. Two days later they returned in even larger force, drove out the troops, and then completed their terrible work of murder, rapine, looting, and incendiarism. More than two score of the rich gentry were taken away to be held for ransom.

One feature of these raids is that the bandits always carry away with them a large number of the prettiest young girls to be found in every city or village which they raid.

The story of what happens to these victims cannot be told in type, but is indelibly printed upon their faces when the ravished and demented creatures finally wander back to their former homes, or is told in even more ghastly fashion if their mutilated bodies are found in ditches or in the brush before bands of roving dogs have devoured them.

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