

scarcely been won and before Gen. Washington was elected president, the SS. Empress of China became the first American ship to enter Canton harbor. Canton was the only Chinese port open to foreigners, and the Americans were determined to crack the trade monopoly of the English sponsored East India Co. They succeeded, too. After a 15 month voyage of 26,000 miles, the Empress returned to New York with a cargo of tea, silk and chinaware that netted its owners a 25% profit —\$30,000.

“American and Chinese merchants got along well from the very first,” says historian Foster Rhea Dulles.

The profits continued to be handsome. Americans wanted tea, above all, and the Chinese accepted sugar, tobacco, rum and furs. It was not unusual for an American vessel to carry \$25,000 in merchandise to China and return with \$90,000 worth.

Then Came the Missionaries

Although the Chinese traders were friendly, the court was a haughty, heartless organization. Foreign sailors, for example, were put to death on the scantiest evidence of misbehavior. The British fleet roared into action, subdued the court and seized Hong Kong. But the Americans, under Caleb Cushing, used only diplomatic discussions to gain equality with “the nation most favored”—a phrase which was to become increasingly prominent in dealings with the orient.

In the 1830's American churches discovered China. The first of many thousands of mis-