

The political orgies that took place on suitable occasions under the blue and white Kuomintang banner and the red national flag were the only entertainment that was offered a visitor to this utterly tedious, dirty and sinister town.

People got married in Urumchi, and people died. The old civil governor, LI JUNG, lost his wife at the beginning of September; but on the 19th of the month the stout, genial old grey-beard was ready to marry again. His choice was a widow of thirty years and of phenomenal ugliness.

The bridal party drove up in twelve carriages. Hardly had they passed our gate when a judge's funeral procession came by. Huge paper lanterns were carried at the head of the procession. These were followed in turn by a bier, swaying palanquins in many bright colours, and a few banners on long poles. Then came a crowd of small boys, clad in red dresses and pointed caps. Behind them walked a party carrying gigantic parasols, followed by red-robed priests of Buddha and Taoist monks. The spirit of the dead judge drove in a four-wheeled covered carriage decorated with cloths and escorted by a company of soldiers carrying rifles with fixed bayonets. The near kinsmen drove in white mourning robes, a band at their head, while other relations walked in the mud. Then came the coffin, on a bier under a white canopy, borne by sixteen bearers. The judge's daughter and other white-robed ladies filled the air with loud weeping. The body was being taken to a temple, there to await patiently a favourable day for the burial.

A dinner at the Foreign Minister's degenerated into a rather barbaric entertainment. The dishes were Russian, the cooks and waiters likewise. Most of the Chinese got more or less drunk. One of them, an official of fairly high rank, staggered about pouring rice brandy over the hair of those whom he liked (I was not one of the favoured ones). MOSSUL BAI and two other Turkis sat as silent and dignified as images, without touching the strong drinks and without moving a muscle of their faces. One could guess what they thought. They had to attend the dinner for the sake of peace and quiet; but they did not give tongue with the pack. They hated their host and his people, and were ashamed to be under rulers who got drunk.

EXAMINATION OF OUR LUGGAGE

On September 27th an adjutant and two Chinese police came to the guest-house, where GEORG, EFFE, CHEN, KUNG and our servants were staying, to examine the packing-cases. This was done with painful thoroughness. HUMMEL had carefully stuffed each bird in his zoological collection with cotton and wadding, afterwards wrapping it up in paper and tying string round the parcel. The police unpacked every single bird. The parcels were literally as light as feathers; but