

traversed the dreary, densely populated plain of Chihli, now in the winter time devoid of a vestige of colour. At Tsang Chow, 79 miles, normally reckoned as a town of 40,000 or 50,000 inhabitants, while some had fled from the famine more had come in from the stricken areas. Continuing across the plain to Hochien Fu he found the whole land given up to cultivation and thickly populated, studded with many villages surrounded by trees and sometimes by orchards of pear or Chinese dates. The cart tracks were fair in fine weather, but dusty, for they were unmade. The plain was indeed all alluvial. There were practically no stones. The houses were usually built of mud, single-storied, with flat roofs. Only the better class houses were constructed of brick.

At Hochien Fu were a Church of England and a Roman Catholic Mission. Pereira called on the magistrate and found the same old ceremonies observed of putting the visitor into the place of honour, sitting down together, producing tea when it was time to go, and accompanying the guest to the third gate. The only difference from old times was that the magistrate wore no official robes and wore no queue. The latter need not be regretted; but the substitution of imitation European clothes for the beautiful silks and fur of the old regime is a change which most will deplore. The magistrate put the average size of a family in China at six. Adults, he thought, predominated in the towns and children in the country. On the average there are six men to four women, and consequently there is a difficulty in finding wives.

With all his experience of travel in China