

The plains of Chihli were soon after left behind, and Pereira entered the more hilly Province of Shansi. Here a railway ascends some bare, treeless hills to a height of 4400 feet and then gradually descends to the Taiyüan plain 2625 feet above sea-level. In the city of Taiyüan he found many improvements. Good streets had been laid out. A university and several foreign-looking school buildings had been erected. Electric light had been installed. There were three motors, two motor cycles, a motor lorry and eight hundred rickshaws all licensed and with European numbers. The European community now numbered between fifty and sixty.

Pereira stayed with Mr. Ross, the Postal Commissioner, and records that, ably run by foreigners, the Chinese Post Office is year by year improving. New offices are constantly being opened and old ones improved. Notwithstanding the bad roads and brigands he invariably received his mail in all sorts of places throughout the Empire punctually and without loss.

Shansi has the reputation of being the home of Chinese bankers, but in general it is one of the poorest Provinces. Twenty years previously it was perhaps the most opium-soaked Province in China. With the suppression of opium it improved for a while. But now again, owing to the connivance of Chinese officials, morphia and morphine are being smuggled in, and people are taking to bad habits again. The people make poor soldiers and are a quiet race. The governor (Yen-shih-shah) ten years before was a sergeant. He had risen more by luck than through any real