

CHAPTER IV

SIAN

ON his return from his visit to the sacred mountain Pereira set out for Sian. He found all the towns and big villages filled with soldiers. They had not been paid for eight months. At Ling-tung-hsien, about 15 miles east of Sian, he saw some hot sulphurous springs. There were two big pools, one in the open which was patronised by the crowd, and one with four small rooms by it, where, by going early or late, a bather could get a bath in private.

Strings of camels, usually forty or fifty together, and travelling with loads from Kansu to the railway at Kwanyintang, were passed, and wheelbarrows with sails, which are also common in other parts of China, the sail being a piece of cloth, about 4 feet square, sewn on to two pieces of bamboo, fixed on to the front of the wheelbarrow and supported there by strings tied on to the handles.

An interesting feature on the way was a stone bridge at Pa-ch'iao. It dates back to the T'ang dynasty, some 1200 years, and is built of some eighty to a hundred low stone pieces.

Sian is one of the four capitals of China, the