

great brigand centre, but there had been some severe fights with the brigands and Pereira was not molested. And he now descended on to the Chengtu plain.

This state of things so close to Chengtu showed what a state of chaos China had fallen into. Another sign was the prevalence of gambling. In Shensi and Szechwan the inns were filled with gamblers, soldiers and civilians, who play a game like dominoes most of the day and night, and with their shouting and noise making sleep very difficult.

The Chengtu plain is about 90 miles in length and about 40 miles wide at its widest. Its area is 2400 square miles and its population 1,920,000. It is from 1600 feet to 1800 feet above sea-level. It begins about 30 miles east of Chengtu and is one of the most fertile parts of China. It is watered by a wonderful system of canals, mostly crossed by solid stone bridges. The people seemed much quieter and less offensive than the people of Shensi. And the soldier had none of that tendency to be offensive to the foreigner which Pereira had noticed in Shensi.

On his arrival at Chengtu, Mr. Hewlett, the Consul-General, came out to meet him and warned him that the Chinese officials had prepared an official welcome for him in the northern suburb. So at the end of the long trek from Peking, whilst he was still muddy and dirty, he had to go through the ordeal of getting out of his chair and being received by a Chinese General and a representative of the local Foreign Office, whilst the band played the Chinese National Anthem, after which he was