

CHAPTER XXII

A TENTATIVE PROPOSAL ¹

THE Shantung Railway outrage has at last roused people on the China coast to the state of China, as it happened in their midst, whilst the far worse state of some of the internal provinces was too distant to cause any interest. Some of the optimists at home also seem to have had a shock, and are now realising among other things that the curse of the poppy in China is now far worse than it has ever been before.

China is the country of anomalies, and whilst the foreigner is more likely to be kidnapped and held up to ransom at the present time, yet there are fewer cases of foreigners (generally missionaries, as they form the greater number of white men living in the interior) being killed, and of foreign buildings and mission stations being looted. So far one bright spot, in the constant pillaging of cities and towns, has been that mission stations and foreign property have either always or generally been spared. This is a point that I have not seen noticed in the papers, and may perhaps show that in many respects the anti-foreign feeling is not so strong as it used to

¹ Written by General Pereira in July 1923.