

words and distributed generous tips. He was present, too, for a short time at some manoeuvres carried out by the local troops of the district, composed of Sarts! It is asserted that from the Fuguan alone he received 18 »yämbom»¹ and an embroidered garment worth 900 lan, but such statements cannot profess to be exact. Nevertheless, this characteristic visit is an illustration of the official customs here and proves how difficult it is for the population to seek the protection of the law. The complaint will probably merely result in providing the inspecting mandarin with a few tens of thousands of roubles of which, if things go as they should, he will have to hand over half to the Dzian Dziun himself. The expense to which the local mandarins are put by such a visit is a sound investment, if they are not niggardly, for a good report from the inspector secures them a new post or prolongs their time in their present post. In any case there is no need to worry about them. They are sure to see to it that any such additional expenditure is amply covered by the taxpayers.

The exception proves the rule. The trips made by these Chinese inspectors (olyen) invested with wide powers are not invariably devoid of results. Sometimes, the people say, they come disguised as merchants or in some other disguise and, after having secretly studied the conditions and injustice on the spot for a few days, allow their imposing caravan of elegant arbahs to arrive. The mandarins who receive them find to their horror that the leading arbah contains, not the inspector, but one of his servants and realise that the position is serious and can scarcely be rectified by the payment of even very considerable sums. After such an inspection a few years ago, it is said, nine mandarins whose business instincts had carried them too far, were dismissed. But if they perform their duties with a certain amount of circumspection and within the limits of the unwritten law or tradition, they have nothing much to fear, for the conviction that such extortion is legal is deeply rooted not only among the officials, but even among the population.

According to Chinese law or custom an official cannot occupy the same post for more than three years. This is, no doubt, one of the main reasons, why they take so little trouble to increase the prosperity of the taxpayers. In Kashgaria, where so much could be done, a mandarin such as the former governor of Yarkand constitutes a brilliant exception. By means of extensive irrigation he increased the tilled area of the oasis by no less than 800,000 mou which were either rented by the poorer classes who were unable to cultivate their fields by themselves or were transferred with full rights of ownership to those who ploughed and sowed their fields without the help of the Chinese authorities. The representatives of the Chinese Government do not appear to display any activity in this direction in any district here.

November 19th. Gambling flourishes here to an incredible extent. You see gambling groups at every
Yarkand. corner, in every courtyard and lane. From the mandarins, all of whom seem to be addicted to the excitement of gambling, down to the prisoners chained to enormously heavy iron

¹ Used as coin, actually a lump of silver of varying size, slightly boat-shaped and corresponding to the bottom of the vessel or crucible, in which the silver is melted. In French »lingot d'argent.»