



*Two elderly »Sielings« in full dress at Lianchow.*

height who did not look his age and was as lively, active and brisk as a man of 30. He was exceedingly kind and hospitable. He had been a missionary in Mongolia for many years, a country he seemed to know very well, and had then been appointed to the bishopric of Kan Su. This year Kan Su had been divided into two bishoprics, Mgr. Otto retaining the northern part. He took a great interest in scientific research, especially geography, and had himself done some mapping or drawn maps in accordance with the work of other missionaries, principally of the communications of Kan Su. With his permission I copied a large map and he kindly helped me to write the names with the troublesome transcriptions of Chinese. He constantly had to consult books or maps, and it was always Father Mortier, apparently the librarian or at any rate a bookworm, who jumped up from table and fetched them. The dinner that the bishop ordered in my honour was as simple as possible. There were close on a dozen Roman Catholic missionaries in the refectory, some from other parishes. The features of two, who had only lately arrived from Europe, were not yet stamped by the loneliness of Central Asia. I fancy all of them were Flemish. It was very curious to see this collection of Europeans with their phlegmatic Flemish features, dressed in Chinese clothes and wearing pigtails and small black caps, sitting there puffing away placidly at their big Dutch pipes. The time passed all too quickly in talking and joking and I had to hurry away to reach the town gates before they shut; in every Chinese town, large or small, the gates are closed at the approach of darkness.

I only had time for a cursory glance at the mission buildings. The church was pretty, a mixture of Gothic and Chinese styles. A building that went by the name of »La Province«, inhabited by missionaries, I believe, displayed a good deal of taste. The rest were simply Chinese houses with slight improvements. Everything was very tidy and kept in good condition, but extremely simple and Spartan. Bishop Otto told me that for the maintenance of his