

bands advance at a snail's pace, followed by a crowd of admirers. The rhythm of the slow music is 1, 2, 3 — 1, 2, 3 — and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 — 1, 2, 3 — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and so on without end. Every other bar the cymbals are held in an ordinary position or raised high above the head of the player, turn about. A small fee is charged for the pleasure the musicians work so assiduously to give the inhabitants of the street. A certain effect is aimed at by their dressing exactly alike and by furling and unfurling silken flags. I enjoyed the great privilege of having one of these bands daily outside my quarters. Before moving on they belaboured their instruments for hours with frantic energy outside my gateway, i.e., 5 or 6 yards from my paper window, and it is scarcely necessary to add that my feelings went through the scale from fury to despair more than once a day. And no sooner had they moved on than percussion caps started exploding outside the gate and in every corner of the yard with a noise as if guns were being fired under my table or under the clay floor on which my bed was standing, for I spent quite a week in bed with fever and severe pain in my back and legs and terrible headache. It was curious that 4 of my men were attacked by the same illness, rather like influenza. Mr Pready, the missionary, kindly visited us several times and treated us with homoeopathic medicines. In addition to this hospital of mine he was busy attending to the Roman Catholic missionary Coppieters who had fallen ill, while on his way to Hing-anfu with Bishop Otto, and had been left behind. When the fever left him at last and he was on the road to recovery, he astonished us all by asserting that he had died at Lianchow and was alive again owing to a miracle. I cannot imagine how such a strange idea is to be got out of the head of a Catholic, who believes in miracles. At any rate my efforts proved unavailing.

The feasting and playing of music by the Chinese ended in wonderful illuminations on the 14th—16th and a military festival on the plain to the S of the town on the 16th. The nearer the time approached for returning to everyday life, the wilder and noisier grew the music and explosions. It seemed as if the peaceful Chinese had been seized with a frenzy for noise and music.

The illuminations are prepared for during a whole year, I believe by each shop-owner's having to contribute 2 tchok daily. Light beams are laid across the street from roof to roof at intervals of a few metres. White cotton cloth is spread over them, almost as wide as the street and along its whole length. Three paper or cloth lanterns are suspended from each beam, red or white, occasionally with drawings or Chinese inscriptions. Some of the gateways or the fronts of certain houses are also decorated with lanterns. As soon as these are lighted, the whole town becomes alive. A procession of small carriages, wriggling along all the streets like a snake, conveys the female element to view the great spectacle. It is impossible to drive in the opposite direction and you have to wait an interminable time if you want to cut across the procession. You can watch this uninterrupted chain of small carriages squishing between the pavement stones for hours. Each carriage contains two or usually more heavily painted women wearing their best dresses and ornaments. The front of the carriage is further embellished