

unruly than the humble inhabitants of Kan Su, and they might easily have hit upon the idea of causing a riot and storming a yamen. It is very much in the interests of a mandarin to avoid disorder. It is infinitely more important to him that his three years' tenure should pass smoothly than that the position of the province and people should be improved by useful reforms. A single riot is enough to ensure his removal and ruin his future career.

There is not much to be said about Shen's assistants. The Fantai Fen is a picturesque old man of 73 who spends his days in his uncommonly beautiful yamen in the society of his 9 wives. Like the Viceroy, he is a Manchurian. He shows goodwill in his attitude towards Europeans, but from the fact that practically all reforms are financed by the «likin» treasury administered by the Taotai, while the money bags of the Fantai are kept carefully under lock and key, he can scarcely be accused of much zeal for reforms. He is addicted to opium smoking, and so is the Viceroy. — The Njetai is an old wreck and had only been here for a few months.

The Taotai Pen is undoubtedly the most interesting personality among the higher officials of Kan Su at present. He was sent here from Mukden at the request of Shen in view of his special gifts for introducing a new organisation. Like the Njetai he is a Chinese, and unlike his colleagues in high posts he is not an opium smoker. Pen is 42, vain and ambitious, with an unruly temper and evidently not an easy character. His service at Mukden, where he took up an appointment shortly before the Russo-Japanese war, brought him into contact with both Russians and Japanese and also afforded him an opportunity of estimating modern technical progress in many spheres at its true value and turned him into a decided supporter of reforms. He seems to be interested mainly in industry and in creating improved conditions in town life. It is hard to say how much is done with serious intent, or to decide to what extent he is forced to modify his views to accord with those of the Viceroy, though it would seem that his energy and superior ability should enable him to accomplish what he considers right. The fact that military reforms are not a primary consideration at present, is apparently due to the need for economy in some spheres in order to be able to concentrate more effectually on others. The main idea of the reforms here seems to be to increase the resources of the country in order in the near future to build the railway from Hing-anfu to Lanchow and probably then seriously to take up work in the military sphere. The Viceroy, however, seems less keen on this than on other suggested reforms, while the Taotai Pen, on the contrary, explained to me at great length how important it was to have a strong army to rely on. Having witnessed the recent terrible struggle, during which China was condemned to watch two foreign armies destroying the fertile plains of Manchuria, he is thoroughly convinced of this necessity, though probably this interest conflicts occasionally with the necessity of submitting eloquent reports to Peiping.

Pen spent quite an hour in giving me his views and impressions of the late war. On the whole he appeared to be well disposed towards the Russians. They enjoyed a good reputation in Manchuria. Even children had been taught by the Russians to say «papa» and «mamma», whereas, when the Japanese arrived, they ran away and hid. In comparison with the latter the Russians paid well, Russian officers giving Chinese who held