

to Chen-chow had to be built twice over, as the embankment was washed away during the rainy period. This increased the cost of construction very considerably. Of the 190 li of the line no more than one-third passes through very uneven hilly country and yet the whole construction has cost about 180,000 taels per km. There are said to be no less than 10 tunnels between Kung hsien and Szeshui hsien, all dug in the soft earth and supported by masonry, i.e., easily destroyed. I was told that there were trenches as much as 50 m in depth. The bridge over the Luo ho and another immediately to the E of Kung hsien are vulnerable points that swallowed up a lot of money. Some kilometres on this section cost as much as 300,000 taels. — The railway is a single-track line of the usual Chinese gauge of 1.44 m. There are points only at the stations.

There is a lively scene when a train arrives at a Chinese railway station. Men from the different inns crowd round the doors and windows of the carriages, jostling each other and shouting. By thrusting out a little white flag bearing the name of the inn in black letters and swinging it round the traveller's head, each one tries to induce him to select the inn he represents. Outside the station there are masses of carts and rickshaws, the drivers and runners starting to shout and fight when you approach them with your luggage. A long line of soldiers with fixed bayonets present arms at the order of an officer or non-commissioned officer and confine themselves to impressing the crowd by their more or less picturesque exterior, for they remain passive spectators of the struggle proceeding between the men from the inns, porters, travellers and a crowd of idlers. There is a great deal of luggage and it is packed in such a way that typical Russian travellers with their bolster-like pillows, tea-urns etc.. would seem quite business-like in comparison with the Chinese. A woman descends from a third class carriage with innumerable bundles and boxes of every conceivable kind. A mandarin walks solemnly out of a first class carriage or his wife and daughters, painted in the same bright colours as popular Chinese prints, are conducted to palanquins taken out of the luggage-van. They are followed by an innumerable retinue of servants, male and female, each carrying some small parcel.

A good macadam road leads up to the town, situated about a mile from the station. Small impanjes, with white houses enclosed by grey walls of clay, stand on either side. More of them are seen further E. Each houses 1 in. The gate is guarded by 2 men and at the four corners of the little fortress there are 4 sentinels, who keep a watchful eye on all who come and go. Outsiders are forbidden to enter an impanj. The careful watch is probably due, however, to the fear of desertion. — Further W, shortly before reaching the gate of the town, there are a couple of stone houses of European architecture. These are a Protestant missionary station and a hospital run by 3 missionary doctors, one of whom, Mr Guinness, is married to a Swedish lady from Stockholm.

The town occupies a very large and unusually sparsely populated area. The main streets are lively and have a number of well stocked shops. There is a distinctly larger supply of Japanese and European goods here than at Si-an-fu. The streets are of macadam. It is pleasant to take a walk among passing rickshaws and crowds of Chinese in white or light colours with raised fans or sunshades of both Chinese and European shape. But only a short distance to the S or N you find yourself among stinking narrow lanes that usually