

Tai-yuan-fu, but so far its work has been confined to distributing medicine. — The sale of accessories for opium smoking is now prohibited at Tai-yuan-fu. In many other parts of the province, however, it proceeds unhampered. The present governor does not appear to be keen on the reform, but even if he were filled with the best intentions, the suppression of opium growing and its abuse in this province has to face some unusual obstacles. The opium of Shansi has the reputation of being the best in China and is in great demand. The richest bankers of the empire are supposed to be natives of Shansi and most of them live at Taiku and in its neighbourhood. Among them opium smoking is a virtue that prevents the heirs to their fathers' millions from leading a frivolous life outside their homes. And the fathers themselves introduce their sons to this vice early in life. It will be no easy matter to get them to alter their views.

The day before yesterday I auctioned some of the things that were not worth taking to Europe. Dr Nyström, who had selected the pick of them the previous evening and promised to dispose of the rest at a suitable occasion, informed me in a typewritten circular that on the following day at 5 p.m. an auction would take place, at which I would sell horses, rifles, cartridges, glass, cups and various refreshments. The auction, attended by scarcely a dozen Englishmen, was very gay, bringing in about 160 dollars. The last of the horses that I had bought at Osh was sold in the morning to a mandarin for 42 dollars, and the chestnut that the mother of the Torgut lama had presented me with, was purchased by the commander of a piao for 30 dollars. Lukanin's horse was acquired by an army surgeon for the modest sum of 17 dollars. Nyström was determined to have my small black horse from Ili and we had already agreed upon the price, but in view of my coming journey over Kweihwa ting I withdrew from the bargain. He offered me a very lame horse for the journey, which I could sell or even give away at the end of the trip, if only I would let him have the black, but I was not to be persuaded.

June 21st.
Hwangtu
chai village.

In the evening N. invited me to a farewell dinner. I had already attended a couple of farewell meals, but had been forced to postpone my departure for unforeseen reasons. When giving me the invitation this time, he asked with a note of anxiety: »You really are leaving to-morrow?» I assured him that I was, and this time I did not disappoint him. As a matter of fact, it was not a farewell dinner, but a reception for Mr and Mrs Makoi, to which I was also invited. I owe him many thanks, however, for all his kindness during my comparatively long and pleasant stay at Tai-yuan-fu. — I sent off Lukanin, who had developed pains in his stomach and diarrhoea, with letters of introduction, both open and sealed, to the Russian Ambassador in Peiping and down to insignificant railway agents and controllers. Almost all my baggage was despatched in his charge, so that I should be able to travel with nothing but the 2 barometers, some clothes, blankets, washing materials, a couple of books and some tins of food.

We left Tai-yuan-fu by the N gate. In front of us and on both sides of the road there was an open plain with scattered clumps of shady trees and here and there a few houses. A suburb with a short bazaar street lies N of the gate. The mighty towers at the corners of the fortress gazed threateningly across the plain with their dozens of turrets. On the