

spirits, according to the Chinese, can only go straight ahead; they cannot turn a corner. So if a wall is built straight in front of the gateway, the spirits run up against that and are unable to enter the house. This is only one instance of the superstition of Feng-shui. It has many similar prejudices with which the construction of a railway through the country was likely to interfere. For instance, it was objected by the Chinese, that if the railway was raised the spirits might go along the top of the carriages and look down into their houses. "But then," said Mr. Kinder, "just look at the embankment and think how many devils that will keep out, running for miles and miles as it does, right in front of your doorways." Much of this sort of diplomacy was needed to overcome prejudice after prejudice, but Mr. Kinder was as good at diplomacy as he was at engineering, and railways in China are now an accomplished fact.

From Kaiping we proceeded to Tientsin, passing over a dead level plain, and reaching that place on New Year's Day, 1887. The Peiho river had just been frozen over, and steamer communication with the south was blocked till the spring. At Tientsin I was very hospitably entertained by the consul, Mr. Byron Brenan, and his wife, with whom Mr. James and I had stopped on our previous visit. There is generally plenty going on in the little foreign community at Tientsin, and besides a mounted paper-chase, organized by the French, we had ice-boat sailing and skating. The ice-boat was a great attraction, and with full sails set we went skimming along at a good thirty miles an hour over the flooded plains. This ice-boat was built upon runners like magnified skates, it had sails like a yacht, and of course a rudder. The pace was tremendous, for there is little friction and no resistance such as a ship has to encounter at sea. For the same reason it could be turned in an instant in any direction, and the only difficulty was to keep a firm enough hold as the boat whisked