

it to and fro, and inconsiderately clawing it with his overgrown nails. I knew that all this formality was intended to do me honour; but, to myself, my position seemed ridiculous.

The man whom, above all, the Taotai disliked and feared was M. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul-General, an official who, with very strong prejudices and a narrow intellectual range, made the Chinese cringe and bow before him. His behaviour towards the people among whom he lived was marked with disdain, but he expected to be treated with the most punctilious politeness. A few days before my arrival he had invited the ex-Chow-Kuan and his successor to dinner at a certain hour. The inhabitants of Kashgar, whether European or Asiatic, were not usually very precise in their reckoning of time, which, for local purposes, was ascertained by means of sun-dials; but it suited M. Petrovsky to be exact for once, and when, a few minutes after the hour, the two Chinese guests appeared at his door, he refused to see them. While he required subservience on the part of the Chinese, it was plain that he regarded as intruders men of other nationalities, whether settled in Kashgar or only visitors, and, if they were British, he called them spies and secret agents. To the Roman Catholic missionary, Father Hendriks, he was actively hostile, while to the two Swedish missionaries he showed marked unfriendliness. The missionaries' position was not an enviable one, and their prospect of success was small, but their work was rendered more difficult by the disfavour with which they were regarded by the Russian Consul-General. Any hint of the approach of a foreigner at once excited this man. From Prejevalsk he received a telegram announcing the arrival of Mr. Isidor Morse, whom Cobbold and I had met near the Kilik Pass, and the interest and anxiety which he displayed concerning this traveller, his nation-