

in touch with the Tao-t'ai and other local Mandarins, and Mr. Macartney's company made me, as of old, feel quite at home in their Ya-mêns.

The amiable and learned old Tao-t'ai, who five years before had shown such kind interest in my efforts to trace the footsteps of my Chinese patron-saint Hsüan-tsang, had passed away within a year of my bidding him farewell. But his successor, though a man evidently with a far keener eye for the good things of this world, was in no way behind him in attention and readiness to oblige. The first visit I paid him was promptly seized for a cheerful lunch party, which was shared by the genial superintendent of foreign trade affairs. Though only a small informal feast, this lunch ran into some eighteen courses, but all so neatly served and relatively so wholesome that my apprehensions as to its results on one long accustomed to simple diet proved wholly unjustified. Of course, we had swallows' nests, preserved fish and fruit from China, and other expensive delicacies; for our host had known how to make his pile (he was credited on the best authority with having sent the year before a million of roubles in gold to his Chinese home *via* Hunza and India), and did not hesitate to make free use of his savings for a little display and high living.

At his table I first realized how much the attitude of the Chinese official class in the 'New Dominion' towards Western, in this case specially Russian, customs and imports had changed during the few years since my previous visit. There were clean well-ironed napkins, instead of the damp hot towels, for use during the meal. My conservative feelings received a shock when I was asked to seat myself at a table spread in white, that colour of mourning formerly tabooed on all festive occasions. Knife and fork were handled with perfect familiarity by our convives, and eating-sticks seemed to lie on the table merely out of deference for time-honoured convention. It was curious to recognize in such changes small but significant effects of that great historical movement of Chinese 'reform' to which the Russo-Japanese War has given the final impulse. The menu, however, was still so thoroughly