

SHANGHAI NOV. 25, 1909.

## THE DISMISSAL OF H.E. TUAN FANG.

THE Chinese people no less than foreigners in the Empire will have been totally unprepared for the sudden dismissal of H. E. Tuan Fang from his post of Viceroy of Chihli. It is less than five months ago that Viceroy Tuan Fang, long since a marked man in the Chinese hierarchy, was transferred from Nanking to Tientsin, and in view of the importance attaching to the Metropolitan Viceroyalty his appointment was tacitly accepted, despite the financial and other advantages of the southern post, as well deserved promotion. With the exception of Yuan Shih-kai, the name of Tuan Fang is probably better known to the outside world than any other of China's prominent men. He was the head of one section of the Imperial Mission sent in 1905 to tour foreign countries, and his influence both in the important provincial posts previously held by him and in his tenure of office for nearly three years at Nanking has always been unreservedly in favour of reform. Any temporary wavering on his part in 1900 has been forgotten and forgiven, and though his appointment to Chihli was said to be due to the desire of the Manchu party to have one of their own nationality at Tientsin, Viceroy

Tuan Fang has always been acquitted of the introduction into his administration of the more unsatisfactory features of Manchu government.

Of the inner motives, if any, for his dismissal we have yet to learn. It will be remembered that at the time of Yuan Shih-kai's downfall, when it was feared that the new régime was about to make common cause with the reactionaries of the Capital, the possibility of Viceroy Tuan Fang's removal from office was freely canvassed. That mistake, however, was not committed, and it was shown that other causes than a recrudescence of reaction had brought about the banishment of the Grand Councillor. The ostensible reason for Viceroy Tuan Fang's disgrace bears on the face of it, at least in Chinese eyes, more signs of inherent probability than the Prince Regent's anxiety to allow Yuan Shih-kai to nurse his rheumatism. An Imperial Decree of November 20 announced, in the midst of a long list of promotions in connexion with the occasion of the Empress-Dowager's funeral, that Viceroy Tuan Fang had been referred to the Ministry of Civil Appointments for "determination of a penalty for having photographs taken of the funeral procession, for moving about in his sedan chair with undue freedom and for using the trees near the Imperial Mausolea as telegraph poles." To any citizen of the West the edict must have evoked memories of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and there was scope

for ingenuity in assisting the Ministry concerned to make the punishment fit the crime. If Viceroy Tuan Fang had been ordered to be photographed in twenty different costumes for twenty consecutive days, it might have been felt that there was yet hope for the Ministry of Civil Appointments and still more for China. But for the actual *dénouement* few can have been prepared. On behalf of those responsible for the dismissal of H.E. Tuan Fang it has to be said that his offence lay not so much in the photographs and the "undue freedom" with which he moved about in his sedan chair, as in the use of the trees within the precincts of the Imperial Tomb for telegraph wires. The *feng shui* of the spot had been outraged, and so strongly is this geomantic superstition still lodged in the Chinese mind that one body of men is found to urge that the offence can only be expiated by dismissal from office, and the Regent and his immediate advisers act upon the suggestion. When we recall how easily the presence of foreigners evokes among ignorant country folk anxiety for the welfare of the *feng shui* of the place, it is difficult to suppress the thought that possibly there lurks in the dismissal of the Viceroy of Chihli some antagonism to his advocacy of reform.

After Yuan Shih-kai Tuan Fang. A ruler has need to be both wise and capable when he is as prodigal of his statesmen as the Prince Regent. But the position in Peking to-day argues no such

genius of government for Prince Chun. If some sacred traditions have been grievously outraged, criticism might stay its voice, but only in dismay at the hopelessness of an administration that can find no alternative to dismissing a highly-placed and able official because some workmen fasten a telegraph wire to a tree. When, however, we look round upon the present condition of things in China there can be little inclination to make much allowance for the Government. Complete inability even to take advantage of opportunities given it, stupendous apathy in grappling adequately with any one of the numerous problems that confront it, a blind adherence to a stereotyped policy of what is well described as shifting opportunism, characterize the Chinese Administration to-day and must, unless arrested, lead the country rapidly downhill to political disintegration. In such circumstances no man of ordinary qualifications can be spared, much less one who has shown signs if not of ability and energy, at least of intelligence and levelheadedness above the standard of his fellow-countrymen.

## H. E. TUAN FANG.

### A Few Requests.

It is reported that the Director, General of the Canton-Hankow and Szechuan-Hankow Railways, H.E. Tuan, Fang has been asking the Government to grant him the following privileges and powers:—1, that he shall not be responsible for the suppression of the opposition to the nationalization of the railways in the provinces, which should be undertaken by the Viceroys and Governors concerned; 2, that he shall not be responsible for any diplomatic question arising out of the foreign loan, which should be settled by the Government; 3, that he shall have full and uncontrolled power in selecting and appointing railway officials and 4, that the guiding principle in purchasing railway materials shall be the cheapest price for the best quality and the Government should not compel him to deviate from that principle to please the people. The Government has not yet decided to grant all of the above requests.

It is a matter for regret that Viceroy TUAN found it impossible to come to Shanghai on his journey to Tientsin, but special Imperial instructions have urged him to hasten to the North. If he had found it possible to come here, Shanghai would have had the opportunity of showing its appreciation of the work which he has done while he has been at Nanking. As it is, it is only left for us to express the hope that the Viceroy may long enjoy good health and be able to continue to render to his country conspicuous service.

## VICEROY TUAN FANG.

The work of the retiring Viceroy, TUAN FANG, during his tenure of office at Nanking, has been of such an unusual character as to attract a large measure of public attention to him. He became well known to foreigners during the Boxer outbreak in 1900, when he succeeded in saving the lives of many missionaries by allying himself against the forces of disorder. When he was transferred to Wuchang as Governor, he found a warm welcome from foreign officials and residents, and during the seven years of his sojourn in the Yangtze Valley he has fully realized the high hopes which were expected of him. His trip to Western countries as Commissioner for the Investigation of Constitutional Government, brought him into relationship with many of the leading statesmen of Europe and America. The impression which he made during his extended trip was most favourable for his own country, and did much to give himself a new outlook upon affairs not only of his own country but also of the countries having Treaty relations with China.

During the last three years in Nanking, in addition to his encouragement of schools and his attention to financial matters, he has shown a keen interest in all attempts to improve the condition of the people of these three Provinces. The completion of the Shanghai-Nanking Railway was taken advantage of by him as an

opportunity for opening a City Railway, connecting the heart of the City with the railway terminus and the ~~steamer~~ landing. He laid out plans for a public park in the northern part of the City, where there is so much farming land, and planned to hold in this park the Nanyang Industrial Exhibition which is due to be opened next May. The Army manœuvres which were carried out last Autumn were largely due to his initiative. It was a favourable opportunity to show how much had been done in bringing up the standard of the troops under his jurisdiction. Viceroy TUAN attended the opening of the Opium Commission last February as Special Imperial Commissioner. His opening speech, though much criticised at the time, has come to be considered as a fair statement of the desires of the Chinese Government in controlling the traffic in opium. The constant interest taken by the Viceroy in literary and artistic matters has been a delight to those who have been fortunate enough to see some of the art treasures which he has brought together. His purchase of the famous Classical Library from Chekiang, and his building of a handsome structure to provide a permanent home for it, will make it certain that his patronage of letters will be long remembered by the literary men of these Provinces.

Tuan Fang

University of Oregon  
MUSEUM OF ORIENTAL ART  
Reference Library

### VICEROY TUAN FANG AT WOOSUNG.

The cruiser *Haichi* arrived at Woosung yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, having H. E. Tuan Fang, the retiring Viceroy of the Liangiang Provinces, on board. His Excellency left Nanking on Saturday, the 17th inst., about 11 o'clock, and travelled on a gunboat as far as Silver Island, near Chinkiang. The *Haichi*, under command of Commodore Shen, had gone to Nanking to take the Viceroy on board, but he decided at the last moment to take another ship as far as Chinkiang. Arriving at Silver Island, he went on shore, and remained Saturday night, all of Sunday and Sunday night, in the beautiful monastery, which the bonzes had taken particular pains to put in order for his occupancy. The temples on the Island are full of art treasures: some ancient Chow Dynasty bronzes, some fine Kanghsi and Chien Lung porcelains, together with priceless paintings, are in the possession of the monastery. These were all carefully examined by the Viceroy, during his leisure moments when not engaged in receiving the large number of guests who came to pay their farewell respects to him. The *Haichi* weighed anchor at Silver Island Monday afternoon about 2 o'clock and steamed down river, remaining in front of the Kiangyin Forts for the night, and leaving yesterday morning at daylight under full speed. Among those who are accompanying His Excellency to the

