

who, though he is not of the council, is present at all the assemblies, and taxes the mandarins both with their private vices and public omissions of duty. It is said, that he who undertakes this office can never accept any other, that the hope of preferment may neither tempt him to be partial, nor the fear of losing his place deter him from accusing the guilty. Of these officers, even the highest ranks stand in awe.

The provinces are under the immediate inspection of two sorts of viceroys; one has the government of only one province, and the other has two or three provinces under his jurisdiction, and acts with a paramount authority; but all are subordinate to the councils of Pekin. The viceroy, in whom resides the imperial authority, convenes the principal mandarins of his province, to take cognisance of the good or bad qualities of the governors, lieutenants, and inferior officers, and privately lodges information against such as appear faulty in the execution of their office. On the other hand, the power of the viceroy is counterpoised by that of the great mandarins, who may accuse him when he forgets his duty, and even petition the emperor for his removal. The least disturbance of the public peace is laid to his charge; and if it continues three days, he must answer for the consequences at his peril.

Causes are generally decided, and judgment given, by a single mandarin; who after a short process, and the examination of both parties, orders the loser to be punished according to the nature of his offence. Carrying on an unjust prosecution, or maintaining a cause contrary to equity, is liable to be punished with severity. Some of the punishments are extremely severe; but

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