

»Now they're collecting their forces. They'll break down the gate at any moment. Better call the others.»

»Wait a bit!«

The light passed by again. Then the chink remained dark for some time. We sat down by the fire in the courtyard.

We had returned once more to our writing when the night-watchman peeped in at our door and whispered:

»There are one or two heads looking over the north wall.«

We crept out. He showed us where he had seen the heads. He also said that he had seen one or two men crawl under the overhanging roof. The darkness seemed impenetrable; but Turkis have cat's eyes — the lights and shadows caused by the starlight are enough for them.

We listened again. Nothing was heard. If the bandits meant to make a sally from the roof and the top of the wall, and were already on their way, they would stop when they saw that they had been discovered. They would lie still and wait.

Nothing happened, however, and we went in again.

At half-past two HUMMEL went out to reconnoitre. On his return he said:

»The dogs are barking less. Only one of the watchmen is on guard by the fire; both the others are asleep.«

And after a final tour of the yard later that night the doctor was able to report:

»It's getting light; the dogs aren't barking any longer.«

So while the stars were fading, and the cocks beginning to greet the dawn, we too went to bed and fell into a deep sleep.

BETWEEN VICTORS AND VANQUISHED

It was 10.42 a. m. We were sitting chatting in the yard when the ominous drone from the sky above Korla was heard again and an airman came flying from the north. Five minutes later he disappeared in a north-westerly direction, without having dropped any bombs.

When HUMMEL and KUNG went for a walk in the bazaar they found it swarming with hundreds of Tungan refugees from Qara-shahr, with horses, donkeys and baggage. All the food shops in the town had been plundered the night before. An unbroken stream of human beings was moving towards Kucha, but the number of soldiers remaining in Korla was still estimated at 1,300. They were said to have three headquarters, and might go out on fresh raids on the following nights.

Old NIAZ HAJI looked ten years older; he was pale, emaciated, furrowed, bent and miserable. One could see that he had been brutally treated. He begged our