

a European in the hundreds of miles traversed since we left Kashgar. Soon he came to our quarters, truly a white man, a Russian; but whether a man born in Siberia and never west of the Ural Mountains, should be called European or Asiatic let each determine as he will. A genteel chap he seemed, and kindly, as we had reason to know when he gave us Chinese money for Russian gold. His mission was a queer one. On the surface, he had no other occupation in life than to astound the natives by a graphophone performance—a polyglot machine that spoke Russian mostly, but also gave echoes of the Boulevards and of the Bowery—words and music that almost denied the existence of the deep Asiatic world around us. Through a clever Andijani our Russian friend seemed to be presenting the graphophone as a miracle of his own people. No fee was charged, at least while we were present, nor did it seem possible that the venture into these remote and small villages could have a commercial motive. Rather it seemed political propaganda—eccentric, childish, but perhaps effective. Had he been sent by M. Petrovsky to follow our trail a bit? Or was the probability of meeting him the secret of the Consul General's opposition to our eastward wandering? Certainly he and the Andijani would not be holding hither and thither across the Turkestan desert without knowledge and consent of M. Petrovsky. And then, when later our troubles began—but why speculate thus in the trackless air? Moreover we learned, the second day out, of a sounder and more familiar reason than political misgiving to explain such double-dealing as may have been meted