

called bad only in a mild way. The people do not seem to care to learn to do anything new. They might learn much from their Chinese masters, but no one has sufficient ambition. For instance, more than once I held conversations like the following:—

“Do you smelt copper here?”

“No; we don't know how, but the Chinese do.”

This, be it remembered, is after the Chantos have had an opportunity to learn during many centuries of Chinese rule.

The curiosity of the Chantos is of as mild a type as most of their other characteristics. They often marveled at our queer clothes and way of living, but they were never obtrusive, and rarely showed any inclination to examine things closely. At Karaki, one day, on the way from Khotan to Keriya, an unusually curious crowd collected around my door. Though I asked them many questions, no one seemed inclined to ask any in return, until two blear-eyed Chinese workmen, with faces bleached with opium, appeared. When I asked where they came from, they replied, “Urumchi,” and at once wanted to know if I had been there, and where I came from. Then two better-educated young Chinese merchants came in. They questioned me so rapidly and intelligently that I almost became vexed at their turning the tables so completely and treating me to my own medicine. When they had admired the lightness of my glasses, the texture of my coat, and especially the convenience of a pen which carried its own ink, all of which it had never occurred to the Chantos to notice, I hinted that I was busy, and both Chantos and Chinese departed most politely.

The Chanto is by no means a hard-hearted man, but he