

his caravan for the desert at Charklik, also known as Lop, two days' journey southwest of the lake. The little town of twelve hundred Chantos and Lopliks, reinforced by a Chinese garrison, seemed quite a metropolis after our two months in the almost uninhabited region to the west. Our four busy days there were enlivened by a case of justice which shows the respect paid to foreigners. Ibrahim and several local men of influence came to my room excitedly one day, bringing with them Handum Bai, our camel-man, whose face was covered with blood, and a sullen merchant, who had lately come to Charklik from Handum's home in Keriya. It appeared that the merchant owed money to Handum. He admitted the debt, but when the camel-man insisted on his settling the matter, he refused to pay more than a small part of what the other claimed. A hot dispute ensued, and finally, so it was alleged, the merchant set on Handum, and knocked him down in the bazaar. The camel-man did not seem to object to having a black eye and a bloody mouth. What troubled him was that he had been assaulted in the sight of all the people. I proceeded to hold a trial to determine how much money was really due, and who began the fight. Angry Handum made a vigorous plaintiff, the sulky merchant an unpromising defendant, and the most venerable of the local gray-beards a sapient jury. I served as judge, and everybody played counsel. When the witnesses were called to testify, every one began to shout at once.

"Sh! Sh!" said the gray-beards. "Where do you think you are? This is not the bazaar, but the house of greatness."

By dint of much persuasion, we induced the witnesses to