

speak one at a time, and to address me instead of arguing with one another. When I began to write down the gist of what they said, a look of surprise went over the crowd, and the old men murmured admiringly:—

“Ah, see that! He is writing. Now we shall have justice.”

The evidence left no doubt as to the guilt of the defendant. He owed Handum two dollars instead of thirty cents as he claimed, and it was he who began the fight in the bazaar. When I pronounced judgment, he sent his frightened nephew home in great haste to get the money. For the sake of a lesson to the people, I let the prisoner be kept in custody till the local Beg could be summoned. He came at once, putting aside all business.

“This merchant,” I said to him, “has assaulted my camel-man causelessly in the sight of all your people. Please take charge of him and do what is right.”

An hour later, a message came from the Beg.

“I have inquired into the matter with stripes.” The messenger added that according to the request which I had sent privately, the prisoner had been dealt with leniently, “with stripes not many or painful, but enough to serve as a warning.” The warning was timely, for I planned to leave two men and all the horses in Charklik for two weeks; and after our experiences of the obstructiveness of the natives at Keriya, it seemed well to have the people know that my men must be treated respectfully whether I was present or absent.

On December 23, I started eastward once more, along Marco Polo's track. The caravan consisted of three of my own men, a Loplik guide, and five camels. We had forty-five days' provisions, chiefly in the form of mutton, rice,