



*A beggar in full dress at Guma.*

When we came to a better part of the road and proceeded at a trot, he trotted too, carrying his two bundles over his shoulder at the end of a stick. He either sang or chattered loudly, gesticulating and grimacing, or played on a large shell, or else he rested from the exertions of the road by turning somersaults, evidence of a good physique.

In the desert of Guma we met the mandarin of the district, who was returning from the southern part of his territory, where a murder had been committed, an occurrence that has always to be personally investigated by the mandarin according to Chinese law. He had stopped with his small following in the sand and was despatching some documents, sealing them with his official seal without which a mandarin never travels. I stopped my arbah, got out and thanked him for the hospitality I had received even in his absence. Not only hay, maize and wood had been sent me from the yamen, but even a cow to milk. True, it had no milk, but the polite gesture had been made (possibly my men were unable to milk it, for all cows in Asia are difficult to milk). The mandarin and a thin man of slightly over 30 with lively features made many courteous remarks, to which I replied as well as I could. He begged me to spend some time in Guma on my way back, which I shall certainly avoid doing. His kindness still continued, for even here, where the best rooms were placed at my disposal, fodder and wood were brought as gifts from the mandarin. — On the road we met about 40 asses with wool and sheepskin from Khotan to Kashgar and 35 asses with silk thread, made of remnants of silk, carpets and cotton cloth from Khotan to Yarkand.