

quicker because the camels are not capable of doing it. They are miserable creatures, old and broken down.

I saw this at Kwei-hwa-cheng, but the guide said he was going to change them for better ones in Mongolia. This he has not done, although I have been at him several times about it. Truth is, it is not all his fault; those scoundrels at Kwei-hwa-cheng are to blame. They made me give the whole money in advance (I protested against it, but it was the only thing to be done). With this they bought the camels—which were scarce at the time, as a large caravan was just about to start for Guchen—and sent the guide off with one hundred-weight of brick tea and no money. The consequence is that he cannot change the camels, and I had to advance him thirty-eight taels to buy two new ones, to replace the one that had run away and another gone sick. Of course he has got the whip hand of me, but *que voulez vous?* If I had not advanced the money, we should not have been even as far as we are now. My only guarantee is in his honesty, which is doubtful, and in the willingness of the Yamen at Hami to take up the matter, which is also problematical.

I had a fling at Liu-san too; he had begun explaining to me how bad the camel-men at Kwei-hwa-cheng were, and how Mr. Clarke's man had squeezed a part of the money I paid for the camels. Now, I happened to know that he had also squeezed ten taels of that, but I had purposely avoided telling him that I knew, in order not to complicate matters. Now I did tell him, looking him full in the face to see the effect. But a Chinaman is inscrutable. There was no sign of guilt. His face changed instantly from the highly moral expression which it had worn, to one of indignant defiance, and, turning to the guide, he said (in Chinese), "Yang-laya" (myself) "says that I squeeze money—I, a Tientsin man—in a place like Kwei-hwa-cheng!" and a lot more in the same strain. It was all I could do to keep from laughing at the way they