

Escorted by the Beg in whose district I lodged and by Munshi Bunyard Ali, and attended by my orderly, Abdul Karim, and my caravan bashi, Raju, I proceeded on horseback to the Yamen in the middle of the Yangi Shahr. In the outer courtyard were several tiny guns, not more than a foot long, fastened to pieces of wood a little above the level of the ground. With these a salute was fired in my honour, much to the alarm of my pony, which was further perturbed by the crowd of loafers that rushed in from the bazaar to see what was going on. I dismounted at the entrance to the inner courtyard, where the main doors were opened for my reception, the side doors being used by the rest of the company. On entering I was met by the Chow-Kuan, a courteous elderly man, who shook hands with me and escorted me to the reception room on the east side of the building. We advanced to the end of the room, and there, with due formality, the inevitable cup of tea was at once presented to me by my host, who raised it to his head and then placed it on the small low table between our seats. I had been impressed, not unfavourably, by the external appearance of the Yamen, with its gaudily-painted arches, and was a little disappointed with this small, badly lighted, dingy apartment where, at the opposite end, a company of ragged and unwashed underlings were permitted to remain. The Chow-Kuan and I conversed in a leisurely way through the medium of two interpreters, and I had ample time to study the faces of the company. I munched the sweetmeats with which my host with his own hands supplied me, and observed that the nails of his fingers projected about half an inch. I mentioned my grievance against the Yuz Bashi of Tir, who had given me false information concerning the Sandal Dawan route, and the Chow-Kuan blandly promised that he should be punished. The interview was lengthy and tedious, and I felt relieved when