

to mend, and gradually became so much better that I resolved to have him removed to Yarkand. I travelled with him to Kiria, the patient being carried most of the way on an improvised litter. From Kiria he was able to proceed by easy stages by night in charge of Ipay, the camelman, and on reaching Yarkand was received by Dr. Josef Messrur, the Persian missionary, who looked after him till my return in October.

Meanwhile my negotiations with the Chow-Kuan made little progress. It was quite clearly understood that I had no intention of going to Ladak, but only wished to proceed as far as Aksai Chin and return to Polu within two months. He told me repeatedly that the territory through which I wished to travel was Chinese and within his jurisdiction, yet I could get no satisfactory or even definite reply. No Chinese official with whom I ever had dealings could be induced to transact business in a reasonable way. If opposed to my advance, as a Chinese official might be assumed to be, he would talk about the dangers of the journey and the terrible hardships former travellers had had to endure, but he would not say "You must not go." Being resolved to bring the negotiations to a distinct issue, I decided to pay a visit to the chief obstructionist at Kiria, and, presenting myself at the Yamen, was admitted to his presence. He had a very haggard, effeminate appearance, suggestive of the habitual use of opium, and he was evidently in bad health. My first visit was ineffectual, but when I called a second time some progress was made. He said he would not assist me or my people to go to Aksai Chin by way of Polu, but he undertook to send men and supplies from Polu to meet the expected Ladakis. I promised that I would return to Polu in two months, and said that I now required only an order to the Beg of Polu authorising him to allow the villagers to assist me with guides and transport. This he