

me. This gladness increased as we advanced and beheld cornfields and trees. At Alajoi we found shelter in a loess cave, and the following day (September 25th), after crossing a country covered with short grass and low plants like boortza, we entered Polu.

Within my three months' absence from this place, several letters had come from the Beg of Polu and Chaka strictly forbidding the villagers to assist me, on pain of severe penalties. When Raju had applied for baggage animals to take supplies to Yepal Ungur, the headmen had met together and after consultation had resolved to disregard the orders of their Beg. A man who had accompanied Raju to Yepal Ungur had, on his return, been arrested, but when it was represented to the Beg that the man was my servant and that I demanded his release, the prisoner was set at liberty without injury to person or purse. When Islam subsequently arrived at the village in quest of forage the Beg sent another letter of remonstrance, which was read to the inhabitants without effect, and a third epistle produced no better result. The Yuz Bashi and villagers who brought the fruit as I was approaching Alajoi, only gave expression to the goodwill with which the people, as distinguished from the officials, of Sin-Chiang everywhere regarded British travellers. I had some difficulty in deciding how to show my appreciation of these various acts of kindness. I had nothing that I could offer them in the form of presents; money would have been inappropriate; I therefore determined, after paying liberally for the forage and hire of animals, to invite the headmen and all who had assisted me to a dinner. Flour, ghee, and rice were obtained in the village; sugar, spices, currants, tea, and other articles were bought from a small trader who happened to be in Polu. I had a couple of fat sheep slaughtered, and on the day after my return I had as excellent a pilau as ever I tasted laid