

he had fulfilled his contract. This plan the Chow-Kuan adopted, and, having handed to him a signed and sealed card for the purpose of comparison, I took my departure. This visit was quite a success, for Niaz was greatly impressed by the threats of dire penalties in case of misbehaviour. This Chow-Kuan, Liu Ta-jin, contrasted very favourably with other Chinese officials with whom I had dealings. He was an able and energetic man, and only in one matter had he taken any step which could be regarded as unfavourable to me; he had never raised any objection to my travels, and he was always ready to restrain or to punish those who opposed my progress.

It was without much regret that I now turned my back on Yarkand and set out in the track of the caravan, which I overtook in the evening. The march to Khotan was uninteresting, and, owing to various accidents, it took longer time than I had anticipated.

On May 11th, the day after reaching Khotan, I paid my respects to the Chow-Kuan, and requested such assistance as he could give. At first he refused to help me in any way, or even to give me permission to go to Polu, but after many protests on my part he agreed to permit me to travel to Polu, though he refused to authorise the sale of supplies to me *en route*. Thus, while he seemed to allow my advance, he made it impossible for me to go forward; and when I found further conversation through two interpreters unavailing, I fired a parting shot, telling him that he and his brother official at Kiria robbed the gold-diggers, and that that was the reason why he obstructed my advance to Polu. No reply was made to this, but the Chow-Kuan promised to refer the matter to the Taotai at Kashgar, and consented to forward a letter from me to Macartney by specially urgent post which would take only eight days on the way, going and returning.

The Chow-Kuan's return visit was not paid on the same