

most welcome, and next morning at daybreak I found Macartney's letter, which after a journey of five days had arrived during the night. In this letter Macartney informed me that, after a protracted interview with the Taotai, he had entered into an explicit agreement respecting me: that notice should be sent at the speed of 400 lis (about 100 miles) per day to the Chow-Kuans of Khotan and Kiria that I was free to travel by any route; that



A WATER CARRIER AT KHOTAN.

the inhabitants of Polu should be told that they were at perfect liberty to enter into any arrangements they chose as to transport and supplies, and that the Chow-Kuan of Kiria was to afford me due protection as long as I was within his jurisdiction. This was exactly what I wanted, but still the doubt remained whether this agreement would be carried out.

Soon after setting out from this place we were over-