

taken by a sandstorm, which attained a steady velocity of twenty to twenty-five miles an hour. The air became thick with minute gritty particles which, while almost blinding us, overspread the tracks already ill-defined, so that it was exceedingly difficult to avoid straying. For a time, while leading Niaz Akun's caravan, I could not distinguish the proper route, but fortunately the wind abated somewhat, and I was able to recover the track. At Nura we saw a pony which was so old that, though in the midst of abundance of succulent lucerne, he was unable to eat it and was dying of hunger. The animal belonged to the wealthiest man in the place, who left it to suffer simply because he saw no profit to be derived from killing it. After directing some reproachful words to him in the presence of many of the villagers, I obtained his consent to my proposal to end the sufferings of the aged animal, which thereupon I promptly shot.

At Polu, where I arrived on May 30th, I found waiting for me a Sia, an important official, who had come with his interpreter from Kiria. He told me that he had been sent by the Chow-Kuan of Kiria to make sure that I should get no assistance in travelling to the mountains of the Polu gorge. He was a most disagreeable man, but to all his assertions and arguments I gave one reply, insisting on the performance of the agreement which had been made between Macartney and the Taotai. The interview was protracted and stormy, and at its conclusion the Sia informed me that he meant to stay in Polu as long as I did.

The route by which Islam and the camels would travel from Kara Sai to Baba Hatun I ascertained to be much longer than I had supposed, and I preferred to spend the time at Polu rather than to wait at Baba Hatun. Sending Mohammed Joo to Kiria with a letter of remonstrance to the Chow-Kuan, and with instructions to