

route had met with obstruction; but facilities had been provided for my travelling by the Kara Sai route. Now that I had traversed the short route, these men were commanded to destroy it, and they received orders also to keep a strict look-out for troops and travellers coming from Ladak, and to send as speedy notice as possible to Kiria of their approach. The Chinese evidently considered that my purpose, instead of being strictly geographical, was political or military, and that I was bringing supplies for troops advancing from India by Ladak to Polu. Even the ignorance respecting other nations shown by the Chinese officials in Sin-Chiang will hardly account for this dread of invasion from India. Probably M. Petrovsky imparted to the Taotai at Kashgar the notion that the Indian Government desired to open up the route nominally for trade, but really to prepare the way for troops to take Polu, Kiria, and other towns. The Russian Consul-General could scarcely believe in the existence of such a purpose, but, absurd and impracticable as it would be, it would not be too much for the ignorant credulity of the Taotai. "Information" concerning British schemes supplied by M. Petrovsky would, moreover, be interpreted as "instructions" or "orders" to the Taotai, and they would be acted on with the design of opposing and thwarting British travellers, though their journeys could not possibly affect Russian interests.

The severe weather, scarcity of grass, and unusual exertion ever since leaving Camp 163 had been trying for the sheep, and several of them had died or had become so weak that they had to be slaughtered. It was now the middle of June and yet no new grass was to be found. In the narrow part of the valley above Aksu, better known as Chadder, ice and snow had collected thick and deep, apparently indicating that the winter had been more