

the province are understood to obtain by the various means at their command a good annual revenue. The Chow-Kuan of Yarkand, at the time of my visit, was believed by a competent authority to save about three-fourths of a lak of rupees a year, and when, after three years' residence, he left his former district of Khotan it was known that he took with him, amongst other savings, 237 sarrs of gold (the sarr in weight = the tael), 983 yamboos, 4,100 sarrs of silver, 43 yamboos' worth of corals and kimkab, and a pony's head of jade, the total value being not far short of 200,000 rupees. The Chow-Kuan of the small and poor oasis of Kiria, after not more than fourteen months' administration of his district, had saved about 850 yamboos, or over half a lak of rupees, and 90 sarrs of gold. In the summer of 1898 this worthy received intimation that he was to be relieved of his office, and he at once resolved that he should not go empty away. He issued stringent orders that no gold should be sold to any one but himself, and that the price should be 400 tongas per sarr. This was about 50 tongas less than the current market price; but even so the purchase-money would suffer further diminution in its passage through the Yamen, where some officials considered they had claims on it. These orders were not mere formalities, for heavy penalties were threatened for violation of them, and officers were sent to the gold diggings in the district to note the names of all persons leaving, and the quantity of gold in their possession, while others were stationed on the road to Khotan, where a fair market price could be obtained, to search all travellers and their baggage for gold. Nominally this compulsory sale of gold was for the benefit of the Government, but really for that of the Chow-Kuan, who, besides enriching himself by purchasing at a low price, would be able to convert a large part of his savings into