

disagreeable the white man may effectually humble and vex the trader by accepting the first offer. He thus represents himself as a "green-horn," and the trader thinking he might have had double the amount for the asking, abases himself and bemoans his folly in having let his victim off so easily.

Indian traders labour under great difficulties. The nearest railway station is at Rawal Pindi, whence the transport to Yarkand occupies about two months. From Leh to Yarkand the cost of carriage fluctuates, but is usually about forty rupees for 240 lbs., the route being practicable for caravans during not more than about five months in the year. The merchandise these traders bring is of many kinds, all in small quantities, bought, not from British manufacturers directly, but from middlemen in Bombay, Calcutta, and Karachi, and burdened with the Indian customs duty. The profits are consequently small (about 10 per cent.), and traders usually make only one venture in two years. Formerly they imported large quantities of charas or hemp into India, but the duty on this article has recently been increased to such an extent as to be almost prohibitive. There is no commercial treaty regulating the trade between India and Sin-Chiang, and formerly the Hindu traders had many grievances, the foremost of which was the impossibility of recovering debts; but by the action of the British agent difficulties of this nature have been removed.

Hindus engage also in money-lending, a profession in which some Chinese also embark. The rate of interest varies from 75 to 150 per cent., and, though bad debts are not infrequent, large profits are speedily made. Most of the people whom I met, except officials, were heavily in debt, the most seriously encumbered being the transport contractors.

The transport animals in Sin-Chiang are mainly ponies,