

hurry of the preparations had been overlooked. On the other hand, it meant a definite start, and duly impressed all 'Ustads' with the necessity of completing their tasks.

My amiable hosts had made light of my announcement that the morning of the 4th of September would see my caravan on the march and their compound clear of the motley accession of servants and followers I had brought there. They had seen several visitors start with a delay of half a day or more, such as illustrates the delightful dilatoriness of Central-Asian travel, and were no doubt prompted in their sceptical predictions also by the wish to extend their kind hospitality yet a little longer. I was, therefore, not a little pleased to find that men, camels, and ponies all fell into their places without much trouble in the early morning. A preliminary weighing of all baggage allowed its quick arrangement and loading. The 'Ustads' had managed to finish their labours late on the preceding evening. No time was taken up with the men's leavetaking—it could be left for the final move—and thus the caravan, to my friends' surprise, was ready to start when I joined them at breakfast.

The camels seemed anxious to emphasise their exemplary punctuality. For loaded as they were, they started off, nobody quite knew by whose order, before breakfast was finished and my hosts prepared to take their intended photograph of my caravan. They had not got far, however, and were promptly brought back to figure in front of my friend's newly arrived camera. The Beks, whom the City Prefect or Hsien-kuan of Kashgar had sent to escort me, were also in attendance, and gave in their Chinese get-up an additional element of picturesqueness to the scene.

When the procession of trimly packed camels with their little escort of mounted Beks and servants had passed on for a couple of miles, I left the hospitable roof of Chini-Bagh, glad at heart that it was not yet a real goodbye to the friends who had treated me with such kindness. My way lay past the