

jawed face which expressed jovial good-nature and some character. At times he looked delightfully angular, like a figure from some early Flemish painting. His manners were pleasingly bluff and hearty, with just an occasional touch of quaint stiffness when he remembered what he owed to his present station and—prospects. His recollection of services went back to the time when he had tramped into Turkestan as a corporal in Liu Chin-t'ang's reconquering army. For many years he had remained a humble petty officer until the *débâcle* of 1900, when he had the good fortune to get attached to the Empress's escort, and riding by her chair on the flight to Hsin-an-fu to attract the imperial notice.

Promotion had been rapid since, and Lin Ta-jên seemed well pleased with himself and the way in which the world had treated him. He did not lay claim to much education nor to any particular interest in things dead and buried. But he seemed to cherish greatly the recollection of his early years spent in Turkestan, and would chat away gaily about such of his old haunts as Chiang and myself knew. He had read and heard a good deal about Japanese prowess in the late war, and seemed full of respect for the Westerners whose teaching had helped on their success. Our prolonged visit to the district was evidently welcomed by him as a pleasant diversion, and the help of his myrmidons which he pressed upon us as a safeguard against the obstructive indolence and occasional turbulence of the Tun-huang people in general, soon proved useful in more than one way. That Lin Ta-jên enjoyed more authority in his own sphere than Wang, the newly arrived civilian, did in his, was quite clear, and under the guidance of his men good grazing was soon secured for my camels. Luckily the two dignitaries were on excellent terms, and the magistrate was only too anxious to let me benefit by the predominant local influence of his military colleague.

From the Muhammadan traders there was information to be gathered about ruined sites in the vicinity of the oasis and along the great routes to the north and east. One among them, Zahid Beg from Urumchi, after many a venture north and south of the T'ien-shan, including