

procedure, and he freely displayed indignation at this open defiance of authority.

It was a pleasant contrast to note the civility shown by all those with whom our stay had brought us into contact. The ladies of the house which had given shelter to my people sent a dear little mite to wish me *bon voyage* and—to receive the rent. The levies who had kept watch over camp and animals showed exuberant gratitude for the *douceur* I sent them, though it was far from extravagant. However troublesome subjects the people of Tun-huang might be, want of manners was not among their chief faults.

I was sitting in the midst of the ready-packed baggage when there arrived a visitor to cheer me, whom here, far away in Cathay, I felt tempted to greet almost like a fellow-countryman. It was an enterprising Afghan merchant, Sher Ali Khan of Kabul, who traded at Khotan, and was just now returning from Kan-chou after a successful venture, partly with British fabrics imported through Kashmir and Yarkand. He was sending back his caravan *via* Charklik with tea and silk in return. My old haunts on the Indus and beyond were familiar places to him, and so too were Samarkand and Bokhara. As I looked at the tall, well-built man with a complexion like that of a Southern European, and thought of the thousands of miles he had covered on routes which were still very much as they must have been in the times of the ancient world, I needed no imagination to picture to myself those agents of 'Maës the Macedonian, also called Tatianus,' who eighteen hundred years ago had traded from Syria or Mesopotamia for the silk of the distant Seres.

At last, realizing that a further wait was useless, we set out by one o'clock, after Chiang-ssü-yeh had penned his poignantly polite epistle of protest to the Ya-mên on neat pink paper. My immediate programme was to move due north of the oasis, and to search there for the line of the ancient wall which I surmised to continue eastwards along the course of the Su-lo Ho. So we passed through the outer and inner walls of the town into its somnolent dirty streets, where pigs were more conspicuous