

calligraphic specimens and 'moral sentences' penned evidently by the teacher or by select scholars on big rolls of red paper. There was order about the whole place and an air of austere concentration on the school work which made me compare this establishment favourably with many a secondary school in the Punjab, where neither ample codes and inspections nor the supply of the latest appliances have succeeded in developing a sense of orderly arrangement. How much did I feel my total want of philological preparation as I handled the much-thumbed and yet neatly kept primers and elementary classics of the several forms! The boys, big and small, showed good manners, and combined an alert air with such restraint on their youthful curiosity that I could not help mentally awarding a good note to the teacher for the 'tone' he had implanted in his school.

I had decided to restrict my stay at Tun-huang to a single day, April 4th, and knew well that it would mean anything but a rest for me. Yet soon after my arrival at 'my' orchard I found that the time would have to suffice for a good deal more work than I had expected. Sher Ali Khan, the enterprising Afghan trader who during my first stay had reached Tun-huang from a journey to Kanchou, was to have despatched his caravan of forty camels laden with tea to Charklik and Khotan long before my return. But with that truly Eastern disregard for exact dates and supposed urgency which for us Western people would at times be so useful a sedative, he now came to tell me that his camels had only started that morning, and that he himself would still remain longer ready for any service. The opportunity of sending a mail safely to Kashgar and thus to my friends in Europe was as welcome as it was unexpected. It is true none of the letters were as yet written. But a messenger despatched by next morning would catch up the caravan easily, and I had an evening and if need be a night before me for filling my mail bag.

This catching of an unforeseen mail train was not made easy for me. I had scarcely had time to wash the outer crust of dust off my face when, to my surprise, my insepar-