

routine which kept these links of the border hierarchy occupied. There are notifications of new appointments to sectional command or to charge of neighbouring companies; injunctions for the strict observance of previous regulations concerning the men, animals, and cars which passed through the 'barrier,' sometimes with the mention of specific dates, suggesting arrangements for convoys such as are in use, *e.g.* for caravan traffic through that 'Gate of India,' the Khyber Pass; instructions for the circulation of orders. Chiefs of companies are summoned to headquarters for discussion of particular questions, or detailed for the supervision of the granary. We have reports of cases of illness, of grants of leave, and the like, and here and there what evidently must have been quasi-confidential statements of the conduct of particular officers and of accusations against them.

Inspection visits along the 'barrier' by superior officers, in one case by the governor of the Tun-huang command, are announced in advance. It was a sensible precaution, to obviate—for the time being—awkward deficiencies in men, such as we find acknowledged with much contrition in a record from another watch-station. The frequency with which orders are addressed to 'indigenous functionaries,' apparently also entrusted with duties in guarding the line, is of interest; for it agrees exactly with Chinese policy as still maintained in the employment of such local auxiliaries for the guarding of outlying border posts, *e.g.* on the Pamirs and among the Kirghiz of the Kun-lun. Our knowledge of the actualities referred to in such orders would, no doubt, be much more complete, were it not that in many cases the letters, though exactly indicating the functions of the sender and addressee, also the date and the person carrying the order, leave it to the latter to explain verbally the details of the message. Considering the intricacies of Chinese writing and official style, and the difficulty of providing an adequate clerical establishment for all the small detached posts, this procedure had, no doubt, much to recommend itself to officers in a hurry and dealing with non-Chinese.

Amidst the mass of correspondence dealing with