

work was impossible in the caves. There was some little trouble about getting enough boxes without exciting suspicion at Tun-huang. Luckily I had foreseen the chance and provided some 'empties' beforehand. The rest were secured in disguise and by discreet instalments. So everything passed off without a hitch.

The good Tao-shih now seemed to breathe freely again, and almost ready to recognize that I was performing a pious act in rescuing for Western scholarship those relics of ancient Buddhist literature and art which local ignorance would allow to lie here neglected or to be lost in the end. When I finally said good-bye to the 'Thousand Buddhas,' his jovial sharp-cut face had resumed once more its look of shy but self-contented serenity. We parted in fullest amity. I may anticipate here that I received gratifying proof of the peaceful state of his mind when, on my return to An-hsi four months later, he agreed to let depart for that 'temple of learning' in the distant West another share of the Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts in the shape of over two hundred compact bundles. But my time for feeling true relief came when all the twenty-four cases, heavy with manuscript treasures rescued from that strange place of hiding, and the five more filled with paintings and other art relics from the same cave, had been deposited safely in the British Museum.