

quarters as long as they offered a sleeping platform, while the Surveyor, who had refused the several temples put at his disposal as being too 'theatrical,' had his camp pitched in a shady arbour fronting the main temple court.

I had reason to feel specially grateful for the pleasant *milieu* in which my days at Su-chou were spent; for various difficulties caused my stay to drag out longer than I had intended. The six days which passed before I could set out for the mountains were both busy and pleasant. But space suffices only for the briefest account of them. Exchange of state visits with the chief dignitaries of Su-chou absorbed most of the first day. The Tao-t'ai who, under the arrangements made by the Peking Legation and the Wei-wu-pu or Foreign Office, was to act as my banker while in Kan-su, I found to be a quiet old gentleman, much bent by illness and the burden of years. Conversation with him was bound to lag a little; for his faint lisping talk was often difficult to catch even for Chiang's quick ear. The main point was that everything about my credit of 6000 Taels, or roughly £1000, was in due order.

Ch'ai, the Brigadier-General, proved a very different and far more imposing person. A fine presence, coupled with most cordial and wholly unaffected manners, drew one quickly to the old soldier. His flowing white beard, an object of pride not only to the General but to all his numerous *entourage*, quite captivated Chiang. He had long served in the northern garrisons of Chinese Turkestan; had travelled in Russia and apparently elsewhere in Europe, for he spoke of a visit to Fo-kuo (or France), described as a neighbouring country; and had brought back from these distant wanderings an evident liking for foreign ways. I could see that his apprehensive report about my intended excavations, which in April had stirred up uneasiness in official circles at Lan-chou, had originated only from good-natured caution, and not from any obstructive intentions. He was full of genuine interest for my antiquarian relics from the ancient Han frontier, and manifestly glad that the confidential objections from Lan-chou had in no way hampered my work in the desert—and elsewhere.