

for transport was brought to my quarters. The men looked decidedly sulky, and showed little disposition to take the ten days' hire I paid out to them, when it was explained that this was meant as an advance for the purchase of rations for themselves and their animals. In fact, they broadly hinted that they would take our baggage only to the foot of the mountains and no farther.

However, much was to be gained by the mere start from headquarters. So I purposely refused to pay attention to warnings of this sort. The same day I paid my farewell visits at the Ya-mêns. Here, too, it seemed the right policy to treat the complete execution of my programme in the mountains as a matter of course. How could Tao-t'ai, General, or Magistrate fail to respond to such unhesitating reliance on their willingness and power to help? But inwardly I confessed to misgivings when I heard that Chin T'ai-tsin, under the Tao-t'ai's orders, was to move out with me to Chin-fo-ssü, the last village at the foot of the mountains, and personally to superintend my start.

The return visits of these dignitaries in the evening coincided with a modest return, picnic-fashion, which I was paying on my terrace to Father Essems' hospitality. As my missionary guest was accompanied by his native coadjutor, and as Chiang, too, was of the party as a matter of course, regard for Chinese notions demanded a reasonable multiplication of dishes. My strictly limited camp service was thus put to no small strain. But the difficulty in serving up properly the various little 'confections' which my Kashmirian cook had contrived, grew more embarrassing when General and Magistrate also turned up and had to be invited. The confusion of Aziz, my Ladaki servant, was amusing. It had taken him years to learn how the simple camp dinner of a far from fastidious Sahib was to be put on the table. Now he was caught by the sudden ambition to do these things in true Chinese fashion, which he had never had a chance of observing closely. The result was a very funny muddle, in which we were expected to drink custard with chopsticks. Luckily none of my guests, expected or otherwise, was likely to be put out by such little *faux pas*. Level-headed Tila Bai