

crowd of armed retainers within a wide, shady space in front of the palace marked an appropriate change from the stereotyped Ya-mên setting.

The reception I was given by the chief on entering the large outer hall was Chinese in ceremonial; but it was a relief to be able to talk homely Turki, and to look into a face that was almost European in features and expression. I noticed all round the inner hall, where we sat during the interview, evidence of a care for comfort and appearance which befitted the residence of a ruler. The Wang pleased me greatly by his gentlemanly ease, combined with a certain quiet dignity. A recent visit to Peking, where he had proceeded to pay homage to the sovereign, had manifestly enlarged his horizon. But I wondered whether the ideas of progress, *i.e.* comfort, which he had brought back, together with a few score of Mauser rifles, would not put the fiscal resources of Kumul to a severe strain.

From the Wang's fort I rode to the walled Chinese town eastwards which contains the several Ya-mêns and quarters for the garrison now much reduced. The well-kept walls and the clean and regular streets of this castrum were a refreshing sight after all the half-ruined 'Ch'êngs,' with their refuse-choked thoroughfares and waste areas, with which I had become familiar in Kan-su. At the Ya-mên of Colonel Yang, commanding the garrison, Chiang-ssŭ-yeh found an old acquaintance. The jovial commandant had much to relate of his experiences in the recent *émeute*, producing the red-tasselled hat which a 'rebel' bullet was supposed to have grazed. But what interested me more was the unmistakable *camaraderie* which seems to link all Chinese dignitaries in the 'New Dominions,' whether big or small. Hearing my Ssŭ-yeh talk about common friends in 'the service,' I realized how the whole provincial administration is looked upon as a family affair by these official exiles from Hu-nan. The civilian Amban of Hami, a sort of Resident attached to the Wang for his guidance, and likewise acting as local magistrate for the Chinese part of the population, proved a man of unmistakable learning. It was pleasant to find my references to the old foes of China in these parts promptly met by accurate mention of all the