

tribes from the Huns and 'Great Yüeh-chih,' or Indo-Scythians, downwards.

I was busy in the afternoon with the closing of a long-deferred mail, when my men announced with great animation the visit of a European. During the morning I had heard rumours of the arrival of a Cossack officer. But to my pleasant surprise my visitor now proved Mr. Cecil Clementi, Assistant Colonial Secretary of Hongkong. He had passed through Russia to Kashgar, and when he told me of the pleasant days he had spent at Chini-bagh as recently as August, all sense of distance seemed effaced. Mr. Clementi had travelled extensively through different parts of the Chinese Empire, and the various illuminating observations which he could relate brought home to me most forcibly the advantages possessed by those who can study things and men in this strange world of Cathay with a full knowledge of language and traditional ways. There was much to learn and tell, and the hours sped quickly. Of course, it did not take us long to discover that we had common friends both in Oxford and India.

After another long confabulation Mr. Clementi continued his journey to Hongkong, and I let my exceptionally heavy mail bag depart for Kashgar, little foreseeing the risks to which it was exposed through the wiles of its Kashgari carrier, an unworthy namesake of Turdi.

Two more days passed in a whirl of practical occupations. The winter equipment of all my people had to be attended to; and as the resources of half-Chinese Hami in the matter of fur coats, moccasins, etc., such as honest Muhammadans would need, were decidedly scanty, the trouble of meeting all reasonable demands—and of resisting others—was great. What a relief it was to be able to effect payments without constant resort to that archaic instrument of torture, scales for weighing out silver! The adjustment of the longest pay rolls seemed positively child's play compared with what I had gone through when grappling with Chinese accounts and those ever-recalcitrant pieces of hacked silver. This does not imply that everything was plain sailing in matters of currency. 'Ak-tangas,'