

WANDERINGS  
IN — — —  
CHINESE —  
TURKESTAN

E. G. KEMP.

Cedric Muenton, 1924. (Purchased at Missionary Exhibition.)









BOUTA BOUINAK PASS.  
CHINESE TURKESTAN.

# Wanderings in Chinese Turkestan.

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BY

E. G. KEMP.

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## FOREWORD.

**T**HIS short record of a recent journey across Chinese Turkestan was written for the "Chinese Review." It is by the kind courtesy of the editors that I am allowed to reprint it in the present form, at the request of many friends.

As it is particularly difficult at this time to secure the funds needed for keeping up the work of our foreign missions, the proceeds of the book will be devoted to union medical mission work in China.

E. G. KEMP.

*London, 1914.*

## Wanderings in Chinese Turkestan.

**T**HERE are many ways of entering the Chinese Empire, for its borders are thousands of miles in extent, but one of the least frequented is the one that separates its westernmost province from India. To the west even of Tibet stretches the trade highroad from China to India across the great ranges of the Kuenlun and Karakoram, and it was after climbing the latter that my friend and I reached the little frontier fort of Shah-i-Dulah. We left Leh, August 17th, 1912, and it was on the 28th that we reached the highest altitude, 18,500 feet on the Karakoram and began our descent into Turkestan. The road had been a hard one, often leading over pathless mountains and up ravines, where the cliffs towered above us to a height of 23,000 or 24,000 feet, and the torrents, filled with ice-cold water and snow from the melting glaciers had to be crossed some 20 to 30 times in a single day. Glaciers made great demands upon our ponies, and the high altitudes claimed a heavy toll of life: the joy of the road was blighted by an unending string of carcasses, on which battered countless vultures, crows and ravens. As we came to our halting ground one day, it seemed a veritable shambles, and in a fit of unconquerable disgust, though dusk was already falling, we turned our jaded ponies' heads again

to the steep ascent. Our men admitted that this camp (Chibra) had a sinister reputation, and we hardly wondered that men were said to lose their reason here as the ponies did their lives. The vast solitude was haunted by the dismal cry of vultures, and the desolate spot did not even provide herbage for the beasts. Breathing became difficult, and the cheery spirits of our men failed: faces are skinned and lips become so sore, that even a smile is perforce a painful one. The compensation lies in community of woe, and in sharing the alleviations brought by simple remedies. It was, therefore, with profound satisfaction that we wended our way downwards through a somewhat less austere valley, sweet with the scent of bog myrtle and flowers, till we emerged into the more open valley of the Karakash River, veiled in a light mist, and saw the frontier fort lying at our feet. Nothing less military can be imagined, but it was thoroughly picturesque, and as we entered the gate, we were welcomed by the garrison, a fine Yarkandi, an old man of 90, and a boy, who at once led us to a clean little cell in which was a fireplace and a real Chinese khang (bed).

It was a red-letter day for these lonely dwellers in the wilds, for we were the first European women who had ever been there, and we were glad

once more to have a roof over our heads after many cold nights in tents (sometimes 20 degrees of frost).

The altitude of Shah-i-Dulah is 12,300 feet. A blazing fire soon cheered our hearts, and we were told that our coming had been expected for the last two months, so that when three Russians appeared a week earlier they had been taken for us. It was not altogether easy to understand how three men could pass as two ladies, but it was decidedly to their advantage, as henceforth they received the generous hospitality of the country which was being extended to us as British subjects, introduced by our Consul-General. All travellers have their names, a description of their caravan and the number of pack animals and loads entered in the register in Persian, but as the guardian of the fort is unable to write, this duty is fulfilled by the travellers. The old man told us he had lived there all his life, and in the earlier part the land belonged to the Nomad inhabitants, then it was taken possession of by the Chinese twenty-four years ago, but never before had he seen a woman from the West. Some merchants from Khotan came in later in the day: they told us that 887 pony loads had passed through this season, composed of silk, bhang and felts. There were no other Europeans except the Russians and ourselves this year, for but few permits to cross the Indo-Chinese frontier are granted, and it is necessary to have them, or difficulties may arise.

After leaving Shah-i-Dulah, we soon got into more inhabited regions, and our old friend caught us up with an offering of fresh milk in a curious jug: he was travelling faster than we

did to a place where he promised to secure for us a couple of men to help with our baggage animals in crossing a stiff pass a little further on. Our cook was still able to find game for the pot—partridges and rock pigeons—but only for a few days, then we came to more cultivated land, and everywhere friendly people arrived with offerings of sheep,\* fruit, eggs, milk, fodder, etc. Money is scarce, and a rupee seems a large sum to them. The men, who came two days' journey to help us over the Kuenlun were heartily delighted to receive that sum apiece for their services. From this time onwards these people sent word ahead of our coming, and we were continually entertained by the villagers; several times in a day we would find felts spread by the roadside, and a little feast prepared, then at our camping ground firewood and fodder as well as melons, nuts, dried apricots, eggs, milk, butter was brought by people from neighbouring villages. We were offered the use of ponies, yaks, and anything else they could provide. We were told that no return was expected, and it certainly appeared to be the case, although we did not follow that custom.

On the 7th of September we approached Kiliang, the first town we came to in Turkestan, and the first place where we met a Chinaman, moreover the only one there, although we had entered the Chinese Empire a week before: this part of the country is still entirely populated by Tur-

\* The sheep are peculiar creatures with a double tail. When seen hanging up in the butchers' shops the tails look like twin bladders full of fat, and are esteemed quite a delicacy. In times of scarcity the sheep can go almost without food, while the tail diminishes visibly in size.

comans. The Chinese resident came a couple of miles out of the town to meet us, arrayed in beautiful silk robes, and on a crimson numdah a feast was spread. My excellent syce Habib, who knew the country well, told me to dismount to greet him, for he was a person of great importance! As we sipped our tea and heard the friendly Chinese tongue we realised we had reached our goal. The interpreting had to be done from Chinese to Turki, Turki—Hindustani, Hindustani—English, by three men. Our host said they had been long expecting us, and invited us to stay at his yamen, where we gladly pitched our tent an hour later. He had lived twenty years in Kashgar, and taken to himself a wife of the country, but had been too proud or indifferent to learn the language. She proved a charming hostess, and was evidently "the grey mare": she put on a beautiful Chinese brocade when she came to drink tea with us later on. Meanwhile, we went out to see the town, escorted by a British subject (Indian) who had come to pay his respects on our arrival. He was a travelled man, had been to Mecca, and was a "hagi" (saint). He took us to his house; it was beautifully clean, thoroughly Turcoman in character, and showed him to be a prosperous individual. It is astonishing how many people from Chinese Turkestan face the arduous journey through India to Mecca, in order to visit the sacred spot; practically they and the traders are the only people who undertake it. We asked if we might pay our respects to his wife, and were astonished when she entered the room unveiled, and accompanied by a rosy-cheeked little daughter. She was

dressed in blue silk, trimmed with green, and from a fetching little black and white cap flowed a long veil. They made a perfect picture as they gravely bowed first to us, and next to all the company who had streamed in with us; they then sat down and took part in the conversation. An exquisite white lamb was brought in and presented to us, but we could not have brought ourselves to sacrifice such a lovely creature for the table, and refused with as good a grace as might be. On our return to our tent we found more British subjects had arrived from the outlying districts with further gifts. They seemed to look on this as a way of showing their loyalty to the Empire, and expressed themselves as proud of their citizenship. In fact, we were frequently urged to make people into British subjects! All we could do was to promise that their loyalty should be made known to His Majesty on our return home: which was accordingly done.

Our hostess enquired if we would prefer to cook our own food, or whether she should send us in our evening meal. We decidedly preferred the former plan, so she sent in a duck, some meal, some milk, and roasted maize. Continually fresh parties of British subjects arrived, never empty-handed. We made our adieux next morning to the lady, but our host was invisible. We presented her with a tube of glymiel (for her chapped hands), a pot of marmalade, and three safety-pins—not the least valuable part of our gift. Our resources were getting decidedly low, and for our other friends there was nothing but a bottle of soda-mint tabloids (they suffered from indiges-

tion, and looked upon us as doctors able to cure all diseases), and the promise of a portrait of King George. The town was a long straggling one, and we enjoyed riding through the shady lanes, under poplars, willows and heavily-laden peach-trees, to the murmur of a rippling stream. The day was still and grey, threatening rain, and we were rather thankful that for several days there had been little sunshine, though it rather detracted from the beauty of the scene. Sometimes we passed small gardens, from which Habib promptly supplied us with buttonholes, but the cultivation of flowers is rather a neglected art: the Turkis give more attention to the cultivation of vegetables. Emerging from the pleasant lane we had to cross a dusty plain to the next village, whence the head-man came to meet us and took us to his house for lunch. The Turki houses have a certain similarity to Chinese ones, as the rooms contain brick platforms like *khangs*, about three feet high, on which mats and rugs are spread on which to sit cross-legged, shoes being discarded. Most of the floor is occupied by these platforms, just a narrow gangway leading to the doors, of which there are generally several in each room. A high wide shelf runs round the room, on which all sorts of things are piled and the family clothing is kept in boxes. Everything was immaculately clean, and the lady of the house waited on us charmingly, with generous supply of tea and fruit. She was a handsome creature—the women here decidedly excel the men in good looks—most becomingly clothed in a bright blue cloak over a

kind of white night-gown and a smart cap made of Indian kincob (silk with gold thread woven in it). Her hair fell in two heavy plaits, one on each side of the face, to below the waist in front. The Turki dress both of men and women is exceedingly gay in colour, especially for the young people, who affect scarlet, blue and yellow of gorgeous hue. The designs are large, and contrast vividly with the background: they are specially effective against the prevalent dust colour of plain and street.

A courtly old Indian came to meet us next day, having travelled three days from Gooma to pay his respects. A large number of rugs had been spread in a grove of trees, and numbers of people came with various offerings to supply all our wants. There are 1,500 of these British subjects in Yarkand alone. Some of them have never been in British territory, but they cling tenaciously to their birth-right, and are extremely proud of their Consul-General at Kashgar. Indeed, they were most emphatic that their views on the subject should be duly reported in the proper quarter. From this time onward we were almost invariably accompanied by a friendly escort from place to place; and our capacity to do justice to the lavish hospitality was somewhat over-taxed, for it was too great a contrast to our meagre fare in the earlier part of the journey. This, I must explain was due not to lack of stores, but to the fact that it was considered wiser to limit one's diet to a very small amount in high altitudes, and there is no temptation to do otherwise. It is remarkable how little the men eat, despite the arduous

marches followed by the labour of collecting brushwood from the hill-sides, added to the usual camp duties. They were by no means overlooked by our hospitable friends, and even the caravan men with whom we travelled shared the feasts.\* When I consulted Habib, our self-constituted master of the ceremonies, as to back-sheesh, he referred to the last Englishman he had accompanied, and said (with a twinkle in the eye) that *he* gave the principal men two needles. Every coolie carries a needle in his bonnet as a necessary part of his equipment, so a needle is a welcome gift to him. I found the promise to send them later a portrait of the King gave great satisfaction, where money seemed unsuitable.

On reaching lower levels we found ourselves in the midst of lovely fruit gardens, and at night we generally camped in one, where we could help ourselves to what we liked. Sometimes the road skirted the great Takla Makan desert on its western side, while the mountains rose majestically to our left. One curious feature of the desert was the mysterious little spirals of dust which ever and anon danced hither and thither like ghosts. No wind was blowing, and yet these fantastic columns are always haunting the plain, produced by sudden gusts of wind. The natives naturally consider them evil spirits. The somewhat dreary road is marked by square towers, which act as milestones, but they are by no means placed at equal

distances. The villages are a series of oases in the desert, linked by the high-road.

As we pursued our way after taking leave of our hospitable friends, we were accosted by people on the road who presented us with fresh offerings of fruit, and we found that our ponies thoroughly appreciated slices of melon. There is a delightful camaraderie of the road, whereby everyone shares their good things with everyone else, be it only a handful of walnuts, or a pinch of snuff, and Habib was quite an adept at receiving presents; equally so at giving them. Our staff had greatly endeared themselves to us during our four months together, and were vastly flattered at every attention bestowed upon us. When the Chinese official translated our magnificent passport, a document adorned with the glorious Chinese dragon, in which it was stated that we were "quite harmless, but very important," they knew that a good time was not only coming, but come, and indeed they never had such a good time before, nor are they likely ever to have such a good time again! Habib confided to Robert (the Pathan interpreter, who had accompanied Sven Hedin in his travels in Tibet), that it was like one long holiday: and it was rather pathetic to see how little was required on our part to achieve this happy result!

The country was much more populated as we approached Yarkand, and everywhere our arrival was hailed with interest, some villages even being hung with scarlet in our honour, and the feasts redoubled. Houses, too, were prepared for our reception, and the rooms hung with beautiful silk

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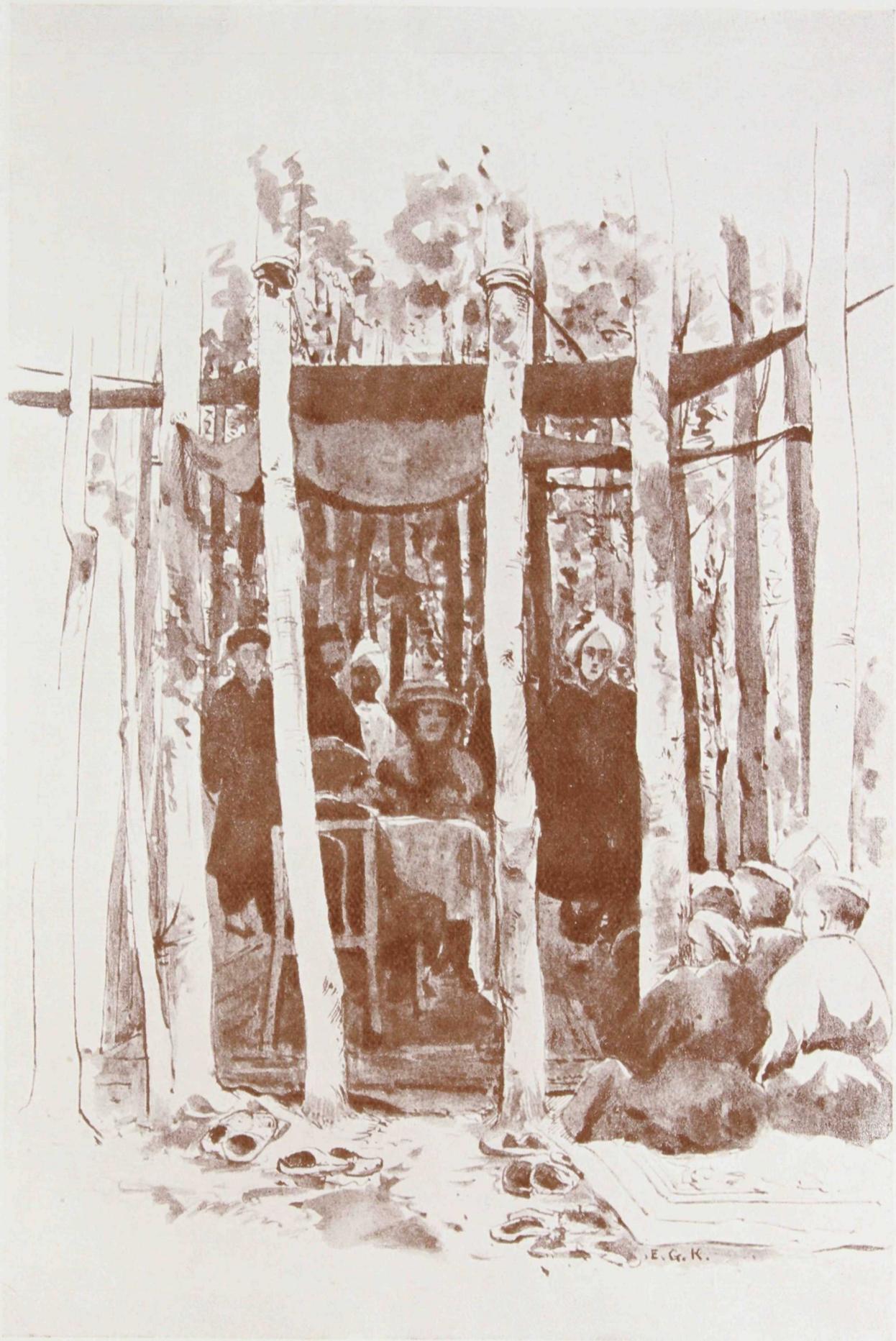
\* Beside our personal staff of four men we had two belonging to the caravan to look after the eight pack animals we had hired to carry our tents, stores and luggage, two in excess of what was considered necessary, so that we could occasionally give our riding ponies a holiday.

kinkob from India, or handkerchiefs (by the yard) from Manchester! In one room we counted 94 on walls and ceiling. One day a cloud of dust caught our eye approaching rapidly, and from it eventually emerged a galloping mule in the shafts of a Chinese cart. It drew up suddenly beside us, and a horseman accompanying it sprang from his steed and seized our hands in a reverential way. In his palm was a gold coin (for luck), and he stroked his beard on relinquishing his grasp of our hands, which is the Turki way of greeting. He next insisted on our getting into the cart, and we were forthwith whirled away at full gallop to a neighbouring village. As the cart has no springs, and you merely sit cross-legged on cushions, you are flung about in it like peas in a drum; and, to add to our misery, the harness parted in the middle of a steep hill, which afforded no check to the galloper, as we had hoped. The driver wound the reins round his arm, and succeeded in bringing the steed to a standstill, and, re-fastening the harness, forthwith we renewed our wild career, and only stopped at an *al fresco* entertainment which had been prepared for us under a group of trees by the roadside. Not only were there tea, sugar candy, "conversational lozenges," sweets, fruits, biscuits and cigarettes, but also hot roast chicken and bread, so that we had to eat of a somewhat solid meal, devoutly hoping we should be spared a further cart ride! We were obliged, however, to give in to their urgent request that we should drive the remaining short distance, but succeeded in convincing

them that our nerves would not stand the strain of such rapid transit after the usual pace of one mile an hour across the passes, to which we had become accustomed.

On the road to Kargalik—the most important halting place between Kiliang and Yarkand—we had to plough our way through heavy sand, and a dry haze shrouded all the landscape. From time to time some figure emerged from it, only to be swallowed up again as soon as seen, and occasionally a solitary tomb by the roadside loomed into view. Our ponies were too tired with their long journey for us to urge them forward, and we felt inclined to envy the travellers who trotted gaily past us. Not infrequently we walked awhile—to the boundless astonishment of the natives, who cannot conceive of such a possibility, as long as one possesses a four-legged animal—no matter what it is—on which to ride. On one hot, dusty occasion, three men on horseback met us trudging along on foot, and flung themselves off their beasts forthwith to salute us. From the ample folds of his gown one produced a huge melon, which he presented with a courtly air, and after the usual enquiries from Habib as to our destination and other more personal questions on both sides, they mounted and rode away. Despite the fatigue of the journey it would be a dull person, indeed, who failed to appreciate its charms, when almost every hour provided such charming incidents.

Robert had ridden forward with a friendly axakal (official) and we found him outside a village called Basherah, waiting for our arrival by one of our wayside picnics. Quite a little crowd



AN *AL FRESCO* RECEPTION.  
CHINESE TURKESTAN



of people were awaiting us, while a British subject acted as master of the ceremonies. The sketch will give some idea of the scene. Under a group of tall poplars was our *al fresco* hall, and the table simply groaned under dishes capable of supplying the needs of a dozen hungry travellers. Where the tables, chairs, rugs, &c., had come from, one could only guess—they certainly did not belong to the place. Our hosts absolutely refused to take anything themselves, and waited on us as if we were royalty. The crowd took off their shoes and sat down on the rugs to watch us eat dainties which had been brought from far-away lands, Russia, England, India, Egypt. Even one knife and fork had been provided!

Only five miles away lay Kargalik, an important place, where a Chinese amban (magistrate) resided; but it was the Indian official, who had two hundred British subjects under his care, that had prepared not only the welcome for us at Basherah, but also fine large rooms in a newly-erected house at Kargalik, situated in a pleasant garden, reserved for our exclusive use. The trees were laden with peaches, and delicious grapes hung in great clusters from the vines; but even China can find no spot where the dust lies thicker. The Russian axakal came to meet us and the amban's substitute, he himself expressing too great "modesty" to receive "ladies." Our belongings were already nicely arranged for us by Lobzang, our cook, who had gone ahead to get everything ready, and we felt we had indeed returned to civilisation as we surveyed the reception room furnished with silk and plush hangings, tables, chairs,

lamps, flowers, rugs, and a well-spread table. No sooner were we installed than a messenger arrived from Kashgar, with kindly messages of welcome from the British Consul and instructions for our comfort and entertainment; the messenger being commissioned to escort us on our journey next day and carry forward news of our coming. The axakal was most pressing that we should spend a day at Kargalik, but we were anxious to reach Yarkand and letters, so we decided to press forward next morning. We were already preparing for bed when a bevy of servants was announced, bringing presents from the Amban. Two men carried sheep slung across their shoulders, another a sack of rice, another a basket-load of melons; next came a little waggon in true Chinese style, laden with magnificent peaches, grapes, apples and eggs; the tale being completed by two live fowls hung on each side of it! Obviously we were meant to select a few of the dainties and return the rest.

Next morning we found four Chinese soldiers waiting to escort us, and they or their substitutes continued with us till we reached Kashgar some two weeks later. They were decent fellows, the only drawback being that it was correct form for them to ride in front, and their horses kicked up a great deal of dust. However they were useful when we came to ferries in seeing that we were not delayed, and were also a considerable help in making way for us through the densely-crowded market at Poshan bazaar, where we spent the next night in a lovely peach garden. Our tent was set up on a platform, and beauti-

ful Russian silk was hung from tree to tree like a dado, enclosing us within a narrow space. The courtyard was entered by a circular gate of typical Chinese architecture and vines formed a leafy roof from which hung great bunches of grapes, contrasting with the strings of yellow and scarlet capscums fastened up to dry. Everywhere the people were charming in their behaviour, friendly, courteous, generous, and if we suffered at all, it was from over attention and lavish hospitality. We had quite a cavalcade to see us off next morning, as diverse in character as the Canterbury Pilgrims. One weird, tall man rode with us a considerable distance, telling

Robert stories of his great doings, which impressed him more than they did us. We were not surprised 'o meet him again later on at Kashgar, where he had to answer in the consular court for his misdeeds, his proud boast being that he had had over two hundred wives! The strange custom prevails throughout the country of a bill of divorce being drawn up at the time of marriage, so that the man may be rid of his wife at once if she fail to please! Next day we reached Yarkand, a most picturesque city, with its many mosques and mausoleums, decorated with coloured tiles; of which the accompanying illustration may give some idea.

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YARKAND, CHINESE TURKESTAN.



## YARKAND.

**Y**ARKAND is the principal city of the chief oasis in Chinese Turkestan, and is surrounded for many miles by well-cultivated fields, and beautiful groves of trees. As we approached, we were delighted to see what appeared to be a thoroughly Chinese walled city. Its walls are from 30 to 40 feet in height, and are of equal thickness at the base, while even the top is 16 feet wide, and forms a fine walk, 4 miles in extent, with a parapet on each side. At intervals the walls are surmounted by square towers, and a fosse (from 15 to 20 feet in depth) runs round the city. Imposing gateways are approached by a covered way from other gateways in the parapet, not opposite to them, and there is space between them for defence. Within the city we came to another big gate shutting off one part from another, more especially the Chinese quarter, in which is situated the large yamen where the Amban resides, who is the chief magistrate. One misses the handsome temples with their quaintly decorated roofs, but Yarkand is a thoroughly Moham- medan city, and there were no evidences of the Chinese religions to be seen at all. Shaw (who was the first Englishman to enter Yarkand) describes the large execution scaffold as dominating the city when he visited it more than 40 years ago, but happily that has disappeared. Although the size of the city within the walls is considerable,

a large part of the population is to be found without the gates, but rarely does one see a Chinaman except within the city, and it is hard to realise that this is a part of the Chinese Empire. In olden days it must have been not very different, for the ebb and flow of invasion went on through all the centuries, making little permanent impression on the people. It is disappointing that Marco Polo in the thirteenth century should have found it so uninteresting that he gave no description of it, confining himself to the statement of four facts, that the religion was Moham- medan, but that there were also Nestorians and Jacobite Christians: that there was plenty of everything, especially cotton: and that the people suffered from swollen legs and goitre!

We were met some miles away from Yarkand by a most courtly gentleman on a superb stallion, who had ridden out day after day to watch for our coming, and had prepared a right royal welcome for us. As we approached the city, we were joined by an ever-increasing number of British subjects to escort us to our lodging, and when our Consul-General comes they turn out a thousand strong to meet him, and form a sort of triumphal procession. The road was crowded with men, women, children and beasts, as there was a big market being held on the eve of the festival concluding Ramadan, and courtesy demanded that all riders dismount as

we passed by. An air of jollity and well-being pervaded the place, and long avenues of trees shaded the road, which wound through fertile fields of wheat, barley, beans, and other crops, for this is a "goodly land." Acres of ground are covered by the melon gardens and orchards, which were groaning under their wealth of fruit. We were soon comfortably established in a pleasant house, prepared for our reception by Mullah Sabit, the British Aksakal. It stood in the centre of a peach garden, and our Chinese military escort was replaced by four fresh guards, who were on duty day and night, sleeping in our verandah. The most noticeable feature of Yarkand is its water supply, and the results of it. The altitude of the oasis is 3,900 feet, and it is watered by the Yarkand Darya, which flows from the lofty Pamirs that dominate Yarkand on the west. Unfortunately, by the time the river reaches the city it is extremely sluggish, and the water supply is almost invariably from stagnant pools and wells, which produce a terrible crop of disease in the shape of goitre. Never have I seen a whole population afflicted in so distressing a manner. As the people have their chests mostly uncovered, one sees the full extent of the evil, and even the children begin to suffer from it from about ten years of age. Few people completely escape, and it is to be hoped that the Swedish Medical Mission, which is carrying on a successful work in Yarkand, may concentrate their efforts on finding some way to check its ravages.

The population may be roughly taken at 100,000, but of this a considerable number live in the suburbs,

and are engaged in agriculture; of these none seem to be Chinese, and the universal language used is Turki. Persian is also widely understood; in fact, the only language which one would expect to find is practically unknown, namely Chinese. Each section of the community appears to be under its own special official, the British subjects under their Aksakal, the Russians under theirs, the Turcomans under the Beg (who came and presented his respects on our arrival), and the whole community under the Chinese Amban. He sent the usual presents, but did not come to meet us, so the following day I called to thank him, preceded by the Aksakal and Beg, and followed by our staff. The Amban was a fine-looking man in the prime of life, and had risen to this position by his ability: he had only recently been appointed, and kept up the usual amount of state, and everything was in thoroughly Chinese style. Crackers were fired when he came to call on us, and when we called on him. A scarlet umbrella preceded his cart, and the ordinary military retinue accompanied him. When he called on us, he was full of curiosity to see European things, as evidently he had never come much in contact with the West. He was specially anxious to see pictures, and, strange to say (like our other friends at Yarkand), had never seen an artist at work. They were all equally astonished and pleased at recognising the portraits I had done of people in Turkestan, and the Amban at once requested me to do his portrait. I was pleased that he wished to have it painted at the yamen, and took it as a sign of grace that he wished a proper

Chinese background, but little did I know what was in store for me.

After an interval of some days, it was arranged for me to be at the yamen at 10 o'clock, and I firmly declined to combine a dinner-party with the sitting, as I foresaw there would not be time for both functions. We started early, for I had fallen in love with the beautiful materials worn at Yarkand, and Mullah Sabit promised to help me to buy some. There are a fair number of Chinese shops, and we found an attractive black flowered gauze, which had undoubtedly come from the Flowery Land, but there seemed to be no Chinese manufactures carried on in this part of the Empire. There were no curio shops, to our great disappointment, and it is always somewhat difficult in Chinese shops to find the things that are most worth having, because of their inveterate habit of having everything so carefully wrapped up. Had we stayed longer in Yarkand and made more Chinese acquaintances, I expect we might have found other good stuff, but evidently the Chinese quarter of the town is somewhat exclusive and not much frequented by other nationalities. One is conscious that they are foreigners there, rather on sufferance than as the rulers of the country.

The yamen is in the centre of the Chinese quarter, and we were welcomed by the Amban in a becoming blue silk gown, and taken to the guest room. After the usual tea-drinking, I asked him where he would like the portrait to be painted, and he said he must first change his clothes. However, I represented that if we decided on the background, I could utilise the time by blocking it in while he

dressed. This he agreed to, and we arranged an official-looking *mise en scène*, upon which I set to work. After a considerable interval he re-appeared, but to my utter dismay he had donned an extremely ill-made and ill-fitting Russian suit, his feet were pinched by a pair of pointed patent-leather boots, quite too small for his fine proportions, and on the side of his head was a rakish-looking billycock. Never was there a more hopeless transformation, and the worst of it was that his character appeared to have undergone an equally deplorable change. The effort to act the part was an utter failure, and my friend, the Aksakal, hastily withdrew to the courtyard to conceal his feelings. It was in vain that I protested he should be painted in his becoming Chinese clothes, for I foresaw that my painting must look a grotesque caricature. He was not only firm in his refusal to change, but told me he wished his son also to be included in the picture, and we had a glimpse of the unfortunate youth being got into his clothes, the deficiencies of which were temporarily rectified by the use of needle and thread. He was a nice-looking lad, and to paint his portrait, even under such adverse circumstances, would not have been so uncongenial a task as to paint his father's. I was forced, however, to make the attempt, and could but pity my sitter, whose pride and stoicism soon proved unequal to the strain of wearing tight boots. He fidgeted terribly, then suddenly got up and came to see how I was getting on. The disgust painted on his face fully reflected my feelings. "Enough," was the verdict, and I suggested photos instead,

for we had sent for my friend's camera in the meantime, and then she set to work to take photos, both of the Amban and his son in various positions and costumes, and in different parts of the yamen. Then he changed back to Chinese clothes, and it would be impossible to tell how superior he looked in them. It will be a sad day for the Chinese Empire when all the poetry and charm of the national dress is lost to the world by the adoption of our thoroughly prosaic western male attire. The mere thought that the exquisite silks are being discarded fills me with regret, and just as we are beginning to become aware of their rare beauty the Chinese are everywhere replacing them by the most inartistic European materials and hideous aniline dyes.

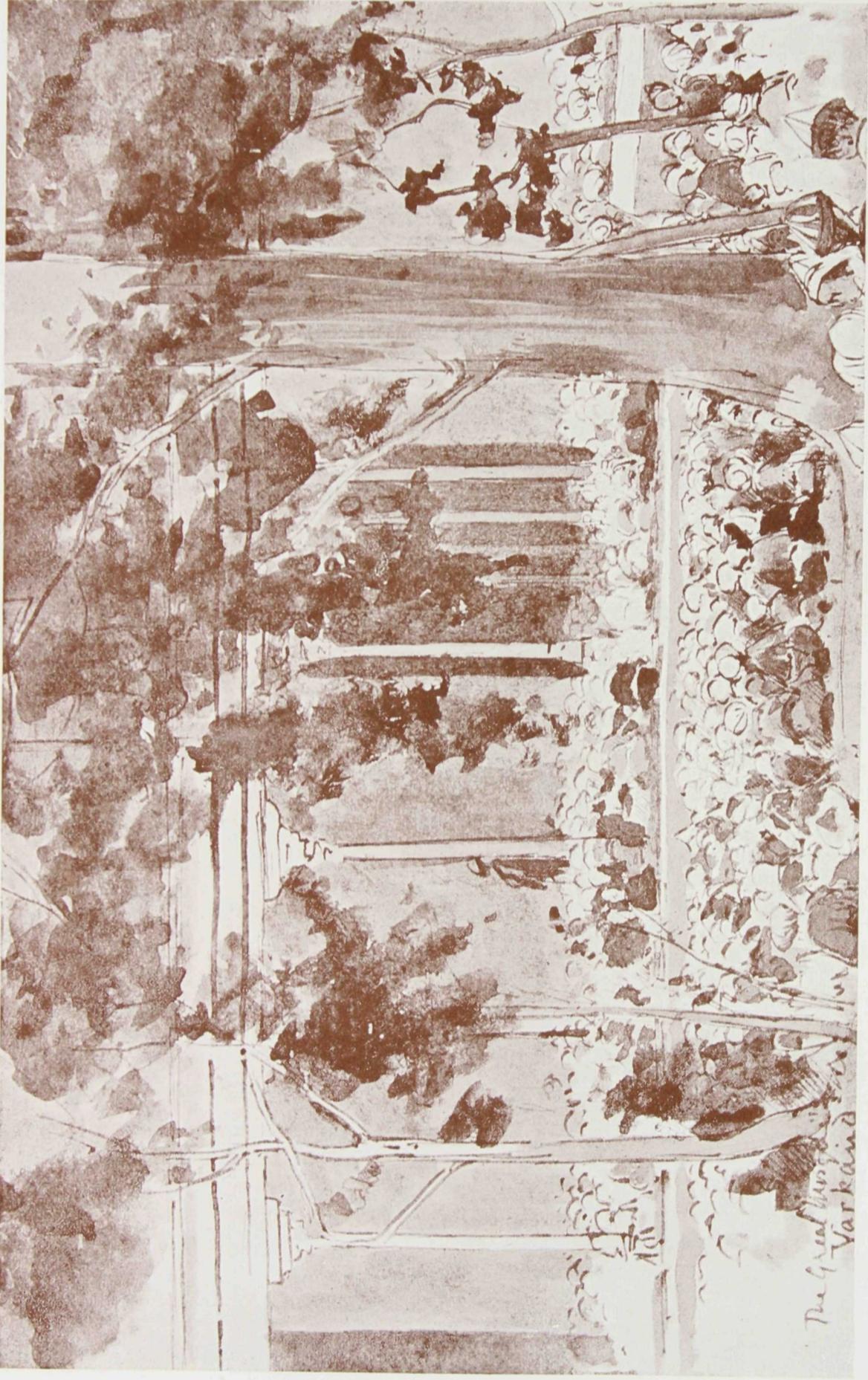
The Amban soon recovered his good temper, and was in every respect most courteous and considerate during the remainder of our stay at Yarkand, but, alas! the true character of the man had been revealed in the change of dress, and we learned shortly afterwards that his official career there had ended abruptly and in a lurid fashion. In the outposts of an Empire it is always apt to be the case that the unscrupulous man uses the opportunity to make improper use of his power.

One day we received a ceremonious call from the Russian Vice-Consul from Kashgar with an escort of cosacks, and accompanied by the Russian Aksakal. He was on his way to Khotan to investigate the cause of a disturbance caused by a Russian subject's house being burned down by a Turcoman in revenge for the Russian having shot an official. We had the opportunity of getting some idea of

the number of Russian subjects in Yarkand, as he ordered all of them to put a little Russian flag on their houses while he was there, so we saw them as we rode through the bazaars: they were few in number. There seems no doubt that the Russians are encouraging the people to apply to them for citizenship by the bribe of exemption from taxation: but there are not a large number in Yarkand at present, and we gathered that the Turcomans are quite content with their present rulers. To all outward appearance the country was quiet and well-ordered, and considering the great revolution which had taken place in the Empire only the year before, it was astonishing how slight the disturbance had been in that part of it. Beyond the massacre of some Manchus, there have been no serious disturbances owing to the change of government. We heard that one of Yakoob Beg's descendants had been visiting the Russian officials, but whether in hopes of being replaced by them on his father's throne, it was impossible to find out. The ebb and flow of Chinese rule seems to go on through all the centuries, but the Turcomans are too mixed as to races and too uncohesive ever to hold their own against Chinese tenacity of purpose. It is the Russians, not the Turcomans, who are the real peril to Eastern Turkestan, and they are pressing relentlessly forward.

The day after we reached Yarkand was the feast of Eed, at the conclusion of the long fast of Ramadan. My servant Habib was a Mohammedan, and, on account of the toilsome journey from Tibet was not bound to observe the fast, but was extremely





The Great Mosque  
Yarkand

THE GREAT MOSQUE, YARKAND, CHINESE TURKESTAN.

anxious to keep the feast, so we were up betimes and escorted by Mullah Sabit to the great mosque. Many thousands of men (but no women) were seated on every spare inch of ground, and thousands were outside or in other mosques. A space had been reserved for us, and seats on a special carpet whence I was able to sketch, having duly made enquiry lest I should hurt their feelings, and been told there was no objection to my drawing. It was an impressive scene: the vast crowd rising, then sitting, then swaying in unison, as the leader, from a kind of pulpit led the prayers. Between the prayers Mullah Sabit gave me scraps of information, and at the close he was surrounded by numbers of friends shaking hands and stroking beards. Towards the close of the ceremony a coffin was borne through the swaying multitude with willow branches and a turban on it, and apparently prayer was said for the deceased. The only Chinese detail visible was the willow, and not a single Chinaman could I see, although no doubt there must be many Mohammedans among them. Shaw speaks of all the Chinese soldiers as Mohammedans when he was there in 1869, for all those who refused to accept the faith were immediately put to the sword when the Chinese were conquered in 1862, and many thousands perished. Throughout Central Asia Mohammedanism is extremely intolerant, and no shirking is allowed in religious duties. The same writer describes how he saw two Turki soldiers beaten till they were covered with blood for not attending to their morning prayers. While one admires the fervour of their

zeal, one is everywhere confronted with the dark side of this faith—its cruel degradation of women, and the horrible ravages of disease caused by that fact. It was owing to the Mohammedan rising in the neighbouring Chinese province of Kansu in 1862, which soon spread throughout Turkestan, that the Chinese were turned out for a brief period of thirteen years. This religion seems to have a disturbing effect, and to breed continual wars in Central Asia ever since it took firm hold in the tenth century. During the last century there were Mohammedan risings in Chinese Turkestan in '25, '30, '47, '57, '64. Its spread in the Chinese Empire is a matter for considerable concern, and is now occupying the attention of the chief missionary societies working in that country. The disintegrating forces at work on the older religions will give great opportunity for proselytism to Islam.

We had an interesting gathering in our garden one day to consider means for lessening the high rate of mortality among the pack animals engaged in the trade between China and India, as we had been greatly distressed to see how the road across the Karakoram was strewn with carcasses. I had prepared a short address, setting forth the heavy losses incurred by merchants, and suggesting that medicine should be tried to counteract climatic effects: this was translated by Robert and revised by Mullah Sabit. About 60 men assembled, Hindus and Turcomans in equal numbers, but not a single Chinaman, and this corresponded with the fact that we met none on the road. Now

Shaw describes the merchant class at Yarkand as being composed entirely of Chinese and Hindus, so things appear to have altered somewhat. The trade between the two countries is computed at £200,000 per annum. To return to the meeting: the Turcomans arrived long before the hour named—two o'clock—but sat on rugs in the shade of the apricot trees, smoked, chatted and said their prayers. Time is not money in Turkestan. The Hindus were a trifle late in arriving, and sat or stood by themselves; both nationalities were represented by middle-aged or old men, and they were accompanied by young men, who seated themselves at a respectful distance from their elders. The proposition laid before them was that as the death of the pack animals seemed to be largely due to the high altitudes through which they had to travel (the strongest animals being often those which died) some medicine might be found to lessen the high mortality. No doubt much of it is due to overloading and neglect, still it is worth while trying some remedies, and the merchants lose, not only their animals, but goods as well. One constantly sees bales of merchandise lying abandoned by the roadside, while other beasts have to bear increased loads to avoid what loss is preventable. On condition that the merchants would ensure the carrying out of the experiment and report results to me through Mullah Sabit, I guaranteed to consult the best veterinary surgeons in England and send out a sufficient quantity of medicine to test the matter

thoroughly. Meanwhile, I asked the merchants to supply me with data as to certain points to act as a guide in deciding on the medicine to be tried, and they wrote out answers to a set of questions on which I wanted information. After the paper there was some discussion, and a general approbation of the scheme was expressed, and promises given to try and make it a success. The amusing part of it was the contrast drawn between the numberless men who had been crossing the mountains for centuries and had never thought of trying a remedy and the first women to do so, who had conceived such a wonderfully original idea! If it should prove successful I was assured that daily prayer should be offered on my behalf in the great mosque of Yarkand. I may add that 5,000 doses have been sent out, composed of chlorate of potash, bella donna and liquorice, but the attempt has to be made from the other end of the Indo-Chinese route, Leh, as Russian duties are far too heavy to admit of it being sent through Russian territory; no report of result is yet to hand, but the experiment is being tried by one of the scientists of the former Abruzzi expedition.

We stayed rather longer in Yarkand than we intended, as we all in turn fell victims to the bad water, despite taking every precaution of boiling and filtering it. Here, too, we had to part with our excellent Tibetan servants, so that they might return to their own country before the passes were closed for the winter.

## KASHGAR.

THE journey from Yarkand to Kashgar is about 125 miles over a rough, stony plain. The road lies on the edge of the great Takla Makan desert, which extends almost without a break for many hundred miles eastward. One has for many hours to plough through heavy sand under a broiling sun in passing from one oasis to the next. There shady lanes form a welcome contrast, and the traveller is always within sight of snowy peaks to westward; frequently their base is lost in cloud, so that they look as if they were hanging in space, suggesting infinite heights and depths; at other times the atmosphere is so clear that every detail of the mountain side stands revealed as if close at hand instead of 60 or 70 miles distant.

After a sorrowful parting from our Tibetan staff we set out, one on horseback, the other in a cart, and the luggage and Robert in another. The carts are not comfortable, but by dint of padding with the softest parts of one's luggage a nest can be made in which to recline and drowse away the slow, hot hours across the plain. Two mules or more are harnessed tandem, and the long reins require dexterous handling. At one moment we nearly had a bad accident crossing a wretchedly built steep bridge. The foremost mule on reaching the apex of the bridge started forward and went down head over heels, with the other mule and the cart atop of him; the reins were drawn tightly and inextricably round the

beast's neck, and in a few moments he would have been strangled had not someone drawn out a knife and cut them.

Next morning we set off from Kok Rabat (= "the green resting-place") at 6 a.m. in the most lovely pearly light, with autumn tang in the air, and were thankful when we escaped from the clamour of rapacious underlings, who declared we had not sufficiently repaid their (or the Amban's) hospitality. In the East it is always an interesting problem as to *who* has entertained the traveller—a problem rarely, if ever, solved! At each place where we halted we were hospitably entertained in places specially prepared, but it would be monotonous to detail them. The most interesting, however, was Yengi Hissar—an important oasis more than half-way between Yarkand and Kashgar. The British Aksakal had ridden out some miles to meet us, and we touched gold in his palm. He at once despatched a horseman at full speed back to the town, and soon we saw a cloud of dust advancing across the plain, which betokened a superior cart, that we might ride into the town in a more dignified way than would otherwise have been possible. A scarlet carpet had been laid down at the entrance and across all the courtyards which we had to cross, in the well-furnished house prepared for our reception; a silk-hung canopy invited repose, but we had our camp beds set up in one of the suite of rooms.

Shortly after our arrival the Chinese Amban—a most courtly old gentleman—preceded by an ample supply of provisions—came to call. He urgently pressed us to stay and have a feast next day with his wife; but we were anxious to reach Kashgar, and suggested that we would call and drink a cup of tea with her at sunrise, and then pursue our way. He sent his cart to fetch us, so our own were loaded and sent forward, as they travelled but slowly, and the aksakal said his would easily catch them up later in the morning. The Yamen was thoroughly Chinese, and the Amban led us into a garden pavilion, which might have been a palace in Peking. Charming paintings decorated the lattice-work, and coffee (from London) and cakes were served, while we had a somewhat slow conversation through Robert and an interpreter. The Amban had brought his family by cart all the way from Peking, and had not been long in Turkestan; the journey took four months to accomplish. Only after a considerable time the Amban said his wife would now come and see us, and he then retired. She was a charming, sweet-faced woman, accompanied by her three children and another lady, and no sooner had she entered than the table was spread with an alarming amount of dishes, containing all sorts of good things. The *pièce de résistance* was an immense platter on which lay a whole roast fat-tailed sheep in Turcoman style. We were greatly surprised to see it, as the Chinese never serve a joint whole, considering us barbarians in this respect, and the remainder of the food was in Chinese style. Happily our plates were not large, so that we could not fare as did

Robert, on whom a whole leg of mutton was bestowed, to which he did full justice at a side table. In vain we protested that we were unable to consume much so early in the day, and we made all the effort possible to show a due appreciation of our hostess's lavish hospitality. Then she presented us each with a lovely piece of flowered silk, and we felt the gifts we had brought were hopelessly inadequate; it is so impossible to know beforehand what will be required! After taking some family groups, which made successful photos, we took leave, and rode away to the gates of the city in the Amban's cart. There we got into the Aksakal's cart, with the wild white steed, and accompanied by him and our military escort, rode swiftly for mile after mile, till we caught up our caravan and reverted to our ordinary slow pace. There are no less than four branches of the Kashgar river to cross by ferry between Yengi Hissar and Kashgar, and we were glad to meet the Consul's carriage sent out a stage to meet us, so as to arrive more quickly and comfortably than would otherwise have been the case.

It was almost like coming home to be welcomed by Sir George and Lady Macartney, who have so long endured the exile of life in Kashgaria, and whose hospitality is so keenly appreciated by all travellers, whatever their nationality. We had the honour of being their first lady guests in twenty-four years. In the garden were a suite of tents prepared for us, for the new Consulate was only in course of erection, and the old one was more than filled by the family. During the troublous times earlier in the year, this garden had been a haven of refuge to





Kashgar market.  
S.G.K.

KASHGAR MARKET.  
KASHGAR, CHINESE TURKESTAN.

many families, who felt themselves safe there, despite the fact that no guard of any sort had been provided for the British representative and his family. Ought one most to admire the official belief in the omnipotence of its representative, or to wonder at its fear of wounding Russian susceptibilities, when Russia had poured hundreds of troops and even guns across the frontier to guard its representative?

We were very happy in our garden quarters, though its beauty had been severely damaged by the refugees, and it was only when two nocturnal visitors had giving us rather a scare, though they got no opportunity of stealing, that our kind hosts insisted on putting us into safer quarters. The only available place was the Indian munshi's office, and in order to adapt it for our use, the communicating door to his house had to be blocked up, another had to be opened into the stable yard, and steps made to it. These structural alterations threatened to bring down the roof, so a tree trunk was introduced to prop it up, and we spent the rest of our visit there in comfort and security.

I had been told that Kashgar was entirely uninteresting; never was there a greater libel. The limits of this review preclude the insertion of at least two dozen sketches to give an adequate representation of its charms; but I have rarely met a place giving greater variety of good material for an artist. The delightful cosmopolitan mixture of races, the architectural interests, the many glories of autumn foliage, everything conspired to rejoice an artist's heart, and what woman could resist the charm of the bazaar, with its cunning little box-like shops in which the merchant sits curled up

like a spider in its web, waiting for the unwary fly? Rolls of bright Andijani silks vie in colour with the gay cotton materials of every hue, which form the dress material of the Turcoman population. Tall camels came poking their noses into the market square, where piles of bales of snowy cotton contrast with the vegetable stalls. Raw cotton has a big sale for both home and foreign consumption, and it is a picturesque sight to see the numbers of women as well as men sitting, hunched up on the ground, waiting for purchasers. The women form such shapeless bundles in their gay cotton cloaks, and seem to live to great old age—one comely hag, whose face was the most intricate network of wrinkles, came to pose as a model to me, and boasted at least fourscore years and ten; she assured me she had been a great beauty in her youth, and her bead-like eyes were still full of quenchless vivacity, as she recounted the number of revolutions she had seen.

Through the motley crowd in the market place I one day saw a procession slowly making its way, a striking reminder of the old days in China. A picturesque figure borne aloft in a handsome chair proved to be the chief civil authority in the city. His exit from the Yamen as well as his return is announced by a fusilade of crackers, consisting of gunpowder fired from metal pots. A mounted guard accompanies him, and gongs and trumpets are sounded loudly to give warning of his coming. The sedan chair in which he sits is carried by sturdy soldiers, but it is only on rare occasions that he goes outside the precincts of the Yamen, and then usually to pay an official visit, or ceremonious call.

The story of the revolution of 1912, as it worked itself out at Kashgar is not without interest. There had been disquieting symptoms for some time, and there was cause for much anxiety amongst the Chinese officials, especially for those who were unpopular and had personal enemies. I had been warned in England the previous autumn that it was almost certain there would be a Mohammedan rising, and out there the expectation of it was widespread. The Taotai felt himself nevertheless secure, in that he was wearing a flawless jade bangle, as he told the British Consul only a few days before his death. Gradually the excitement in the city rose to fever pitch, fomented by an intellectual-looking stranger in semi-foreign dress, wearing pince-nez. It afterwards transpired that he had come from Ili for the express purpose of creating trouble, and he went about sowing discontent amongst the most disreputable part of the Chinese population, a set of gamblers and ruffians called "cumberbasses." Shortly before the storm burst he presented himself amongst other suppliants for shelter at the British Consulate, and, his character being unknown, was admitted and placed under the care of the Chinese munshi, with strict orders not to show himself. On May 7th the gates of the city were only open long enough for a Russian Jew to push his way out, and he ran to the Russian Consulate with the news that the Taotai was being murdered, and the news was carried thence to the British Consulate. As there was a guard of seventy at the former place, the refugee was privately transferred there without delay. At 8 o'clock a signal was made from the

top of the city wall to the British Consulate, and when a messenger was sent to learn the meaning of it, a red Chinese visiting card came fluttering down, and a polite message was sent from the insurgents to Mr. Macartney, informing him that the Taotai had been murdered, but that he need have no anxiety, all disturbance was at an end, and that the city gate would remain closed for the present. A similar communication was afterwards sent to the Russian consulate.

What took place within the city was the murder at dawn of the Taotai and his wife in their beds by a party of rebels, or cumberbasses, who then proceeded to the Hsitai, or second magistrate, and demanded arms from the treasury, after telling him what they had done. He proved a courageous and sensible man, and told them he must first go to the new city and fetch the new official, whom they had already chosen to take the place of the murdered Taotai. They consented to this, and actually remained there quietly until his return, although they could with perfect ease have looted the treasury, which lay at their mercy. When the Hsitai returned with the newly elected Taotai—who was in mortal terror—he made the appointment officially in presence of the rebels, and everything returned to its normal condition. The city gates were re-opened, and the following afternoon the Hsitai paid formal calls at the consulates to announce what had happened. As he was sitting there talking, a messenger came to tell him that the new city was in flames, so he hurried off there and found the dead bodies of an official and another man lying outside the yamen. He sat down

with one of the ring-leaders and remonstrated with him, but soon observed soldiers with dripping swords come creeping up behind, edging closer and closer to him. He turned suddenly, and sharply ordered them away; they obeyed, but very soon began creeping back again. With great sangfroid he then challenged them for the reason why they had put twelve men in prison for cutting off their queues, adding "I have done the same, why don't you put *me* in prison?" Finally he succeeded in getting them released, and nothing further happened. If it had not been for his pluck and firmness much worse things might have taken place. It was this same man who enlisted the cumberbasses as regular soldiers, requiring them to lay down their arms which were not returned to them.

Meanwhile the instigator of these things got away in the following manner. On the afternoon of May 7th the murdered Taotai's fine cart came rattling up to the British consulate, driven by a man with his head gashed in several places, who demanded word with the refugee. He was taken by a back way to the Russian consulate, and the refugee evidently knew him, and at once said, "Why did they kill the Taotai before the appointed time?" adding other remarks which showed that he was thoroughly cognizant of all that was happening. He went off with the wounded man, and was no more seen at Kashgar, but the state of tension lasted all through the summer, and we were not surprised when we heard these details that it was with a certain hesitation that our coming had been sanctioned for that autumn. The country was perfectly

quiet in September, but things would have been very different if it had not been for the wisdom and courage and tact of one man.

As the result of the disturbance, several hundred Russian soldiers had been poured into the country, and there were plenty of opportunities for friction between them and the revolutionaries. The Russian troops were quartered outside the city gates, and the Chinese soldiers within the gates, which are always closed at sundown; but we saw the trace of what might have been a pretty little misunderstanding between them.

At the Chinese fifth month there are always large bonfires, when the paper offerings to the dead are solemnly burnt. This forms an important ceremony, and as usual it was being done in an open space in the city of Kashgar. Someone, whether from a spirit of mischief or from real fear no one knows, dashed to the Russian barracks and said that the property of a Russian subject was in danger from the flames. Forthwith a party of soldiers rode into the city, dismounted, and began to destroy the bonfire without any reference to the Chinese officials. Some little rioting naturally took place, but no one was hurt, only the horses got away and stampeded back to the barracks. Then the gates were closed at the usual hour, leaving the Russians within the city. The return of the riderless horses set up a panic at the barracks, which was increased by finding the gate shut, and quickly a rumour spread that the Russians were being massacred. Armed with gunpowder, they instantly went to the nearest gate and blew it up, only to find their fears entirely groundless. No apology was

offered to the Chinese authorities, who were left to repair the damage themselves, and adding insult to injury, a Russian soldier was thenceforward placed on sentry duty at the gate. (See sketch.) Had it not been for the wise and pacific advice of the British representative, who can say what results might have ensued.

During our stay another incident occurred, showing plainly the policy of the Russians. The insurrectionary troop mentioned above, which had been got under some measure of control during the months since its enrolment, was to be sent to the city of Ili, where there was a strong garrison of regular troops, and it would no longer remain a source of danger by its undisciplined habits. It had been such a menace to the peace-loving inhabitants that the weekly markets, which are quite a feature of life throughout Kashgaria, had been miserably attended, and trade greatly hindered; the moment they left this was quite changed. In order to prevent any collision at the time of departure, the general decided that it should take place in the middle of the night. Large numbers of carts had been hired to take the soldiers' baggage and women folk, and some excitement prevailed throughout the city, together with a general feeling of satisfaction that the city was to be freed from a dangerous element of the population. When the day of departure came the Chinese Secretary brought word at dusk to our consulate that the Russian troops were also prepared to move out, and such indeed proved to be the case. It was being done very quietly, and they were not at all pleased at finding their movements were observed. The answer they

gave, when asked the meaning of it, was that they were going to do manœuvres on the Ili road. As they had never before been known to do manœuvres in the middle of the night round Kashgar, the inference was obvious, and it was only by prompt counteraction that serious disaster was averted. The Chinese soldiers did *not* start that night, but waited till the following morning, and there was no disturbance of any kind.

It may not be inappropriate to give a few words on the history of Kashgar, for it is a very old and important city, dating back beyond the Christian era, and from its geographical position being of great political and commercial importance. The first reliable historic record of it is Chinese; the Chinese conquered the city of Suleh (as it is still called by them) in the year 76 B.C. Then follows a long period of obscurity, when the land was swept by a series of racial and religious changes. Upon this period we may hope for great light to be thrown by Dr. von Le Coq, the noted archæologist, who has recently returned from Turkestan, laden with archæological treasures. He has been successful in finding MSS. of the utmost historical importance, and when he has had time to arrange and prepare their information for the public, we shall have a history, instead of disconnected scraps of history of Chinese Turkestan. The romantic story of some of Dr. von Le Coq's most valuable pictorial finds has still to be told: how he crossed steep passes and penetrated into a deep rocky ravine, where lay hidden through the centuries more than thirty caverns on whose walls were tempera paintings of supreme value; how with infinite



KASHGAR.  
CHINESE TURKESTAN.



patience and skill these drawings were removed to add to the treasures of the Museum für Völker Kunde, in Berlin; and how, finally—as if the gods were moved to fury by the rifling of their hidden treasure-house—one of the great earthquakes which desolate Central Asia with ever-increasing frequency, came and utterly destroyed the caves, which had stood inviolate through the long preceding centuries.

In the early centuries of the Christian era Buddhism got a strong hold over the major part of Central Asia. Then Nestorian Christianity followed close on its heels (in the fifth century), and bishoprics were established at Herat, Merv, and Samarkand, lastly in Kashgaria; it spread from those cities eastward to the very heart of China, to Sianfu the capital, and to Peking. The missionary ardour of the Nestorians was great, and added to this, persecutions drove them still further from the sphere of the Roman Com-

munion. In 1265 there were over seventy dioceses in Asia, and Marco Polo speaks of seeing their churches; but already the Mohammedan invasion was sweeping over Central Asia, and it is only at the present day that archæology is recovering traces of their domination, so completely were they destroyed by the ruthless Moslem conquerors. In the eighth century Kashgar had joined forces with Bokhara to repel the Arab invasion, but it was entirely unavailing, and in the tenth century Kashgar was already under the sway of Islam and ruled by the Turks.

Coming down to recent history we find the Chinese planting their emigrants round Kashgar after an invasion of it, accompanied by wholesale massacre, in 1759. At the present time many Chinese farmers are to be found in the surrounding district, and the land is well cultivated and fruitful.

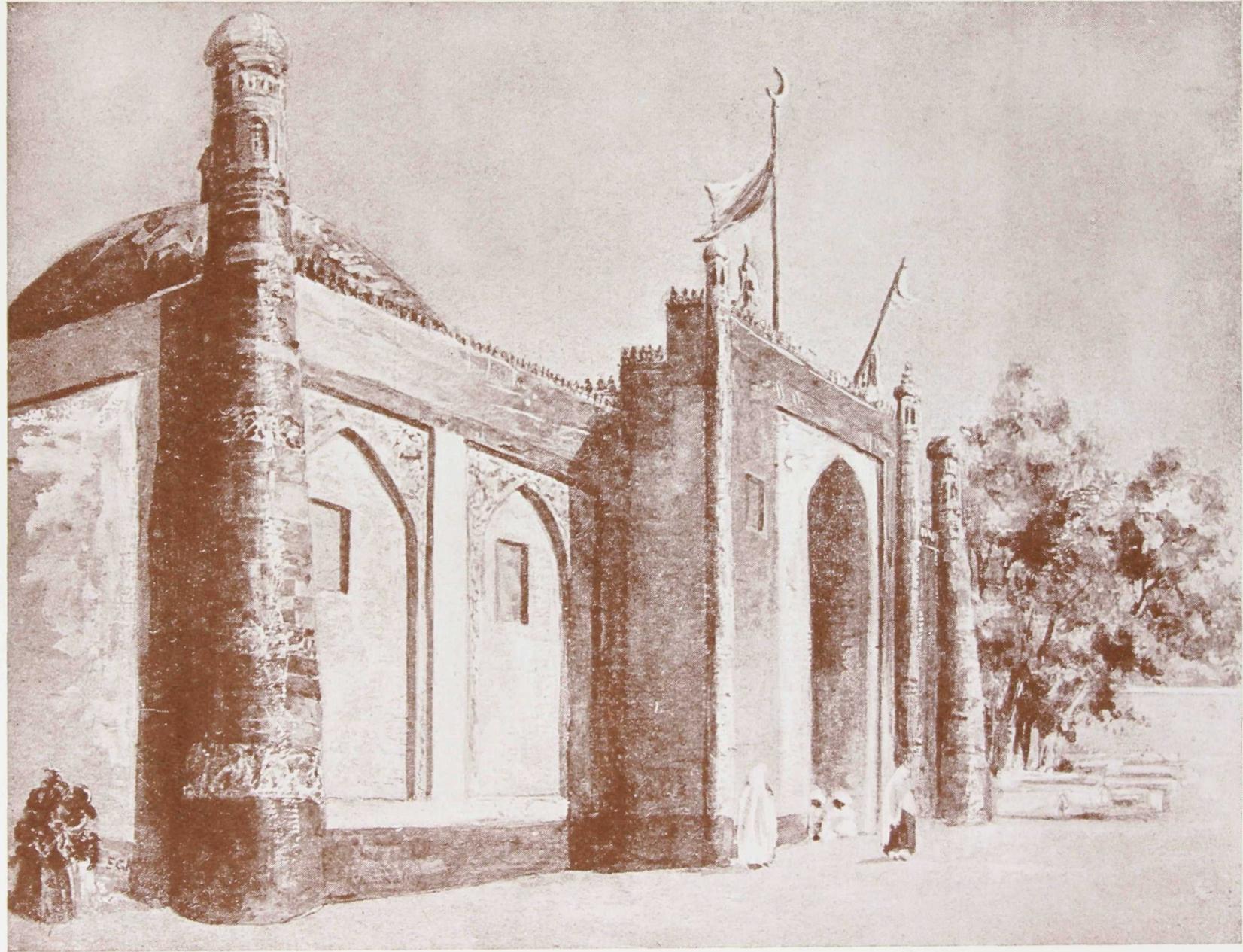
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## KASHGARIA AND ITS HISTORY.

**N**O account of Kashgar would be at all complete without explanation of its wide area and yet limited population. It is in reality three towns, the main one, called Kuhna Shahr, being a small fortified city with lofty walls, on the banks of the river Tuman. The buttressed bastions, surmounted by turrets for defence, look thoroughly picturesque, whether viewed from without or from within the city, but would be of singularly little value as a means of defence. Fortunately the constant changes of rulers in Turkestan are carried out in a mild manner, without as a rule affecting the people at all seriously. The last episode of this kind was in 1877, after the death of Yakoob Beg, when the Chinese returned from their twelve years' absence: the Turcoman soldiers, on hearing of their approach, simply slipped out of uniform and, as Sir Francis Younghusband says, "Assuming the dress of cultivators, walked about the fields in a lamb-like and innocent manner." No opposition was offered to the entry of the Chinese, only the ruling classes quietly slipped away, and everything went on as usual. "The Chinese are always good at effect" (quoting again from the same writer), "however bad they may be in practice; and as in countries like Turkestan a good deal may be done by effect alone, I think their noisy parade of watchfulness must make no small impression on the people. The deep booming of the gongs through the stillness of the night, the blaring of the trumpets, and the noise of the cannon nightly remind the inhabitants

of these towns of Turkestan that the conquerors, who have returned again and again to the country, are still among them and still on the watch."

One of the finest views of the city is from a Chinese temple perched high up beside the city wall, commanding a wide view over the country also, with the river winding round the eastern side of Kashgar. There are only some 2,500 houses in it, containing an estimated population of 60,000, and a fair number of mosques, some decorated with tiles, but not so beautiful as those in Yarkand. On the northern side of Kashgar are the remains of the old city, which must have been much larger in extent, and extending on both sides of the river; some of the old walls are still standing, measuring twelve feet in thickness at the top. There are still inhabited districts scattered over it, but what is more observable is the large area covered with neglected graves, the most depressing scene. This city called Aski Shahr was destroyed by Abubekr in 1514, but it contains still one beautiful monument of a later date, the mausoleum of Hazret Apak, the saint king, who died in 1693. It is a lofty building, decorated with beautiful blue, green, and white tiles, situated among fine silver poplar trees, and with the customary large tanks in close proximity; these are of the most beautiful deep blue-green colour encircled by shady trees. Yakoob Beg built a college, mosque and monastery round it, and it is still well kept up. By the help of a specially pious Mohammedan, we gained admittance to the interior, where are a



A TURCOMAN MAUSOLEUM AT KASHGAR.  
CHINESE TURKESTAN.



number of tiled tombs, with banners and lanterns hung above them, and stands of strange staves, decorated with yak tails. Perhaps the strangest thing of all was a sedan chair placed there in memory of a beautiful maiden, whose tragic fate was as follows:—

She had been sent, according to the custom of those days, as tribute to the Chinese Emperor at Peking, and doubtless, owing to her beauty had won his favour sufficiently to plead release from the lifelong exile. The homesick captive received permission to return to her native land, and even a parting gift from the emperor—a box of sweetmeats—which he told her she must not open till she was within sight of home. She faithfully obeyed his instructions, and when the litter was opened at Kashgar, it contained the lifeless body of the maiden.

One of the interesting features of the mausoleum was the large number of rams' horns placed on pedestals outside, and also decorating the wall surrounding it; they are placed there as votive offerings by the pilgrims who come to this sacred spot. There were many veiled women circling round it, praying with faces pressed to the outside wall of the mausoleum; while the customary crowds of religious mendicants had to be appeased with a shower of small coins.

The Yangi Shahr, or new city of Kashgar is very different from the other two; it is thoroughly Chinese, having been built by them in 1838. It is a walled town about seven miles away from the old city, oblong in shape, and with a single gateway. There is a fine Taoist temple in it, and the streets are unusually wide and clean. We visited several curio shops,

and bought specimens of Turkish jade of various colours, quite different from what we had bought in Western China. The workmanship was good, and the prices most moderate: there were black, red, sea-green, lettuce-green, poplar-green bangles, for Chinese Turkestan is noted for its jade (yü). It comes from the mountains of Khotan and Yarkand, where it is quarried and also is found in the form of pebbles in the river beds. In a description of the country written by a Manchu in 1777, he describes the mountain sides as entirely composed of jade, and tells how the Mohammedans ride on yaks above the snow limit and light fires to loosen the stone, which they then dig out in great blocks and roll them down the precipices. In 1764, no less than 39 slabs of this jade were forwarded by the governor of Yarkand to the emperor, and they weighed 5,300 lbs.; they were made into a set of musical stones called "ch'ing," which are used for state ceremonies. There were also a number of smaller stones for ordinary chimes, which are hung up in sets of sixteen squares (of graduated thickness) and struck with an ebony mallet. The fine monolith in Tamerlane's tomb at Samarkand is the same nephrites and probably came from this source. The rivers of Khotan, where most of the jade pebbles are found, are Yurungkash—"White Jade," and Karakash—"Black Jade": these pebbles are greatly esteemed by the jade cutters, as they often take strange shapes, and with little carving are made to represent fruit or animals, the parti-coloured rind of the stone being skilfully made use of in the design.

The Manchu writer above mentioned says of the Yarkand river pebbles, "the largest are as big as round fruit dishes, or square peck measures, the smallest the size of a fist or chestnut, and some of the boulders weigh more than 500 lbs. There are many different colours, among which snow-white, kingfisher-feather, green, beeswax yellow, cinabar red, and ink black, are all considered valuable; but the most difficult to find of all are pieces of pure mutton-fat texture with vermilion spots, and others of bright spinach green flecked with shining points of gold, so that these two varieties rank as the rarest and most precious of jades.\*

But the jade shops were not the only ones that claimed our attention; there was a confectioner's, where cakes and sweets of most excellent quality were to be obtained. The spotless cleanliness of the shop, and the friendliness of the shopkeeper added to its charm, and we returned once and again for the cakes made of honey and sesame seeds. "Sesame" had only suggested Ruskin to me up to this time, but more material views of sesame have since held sway in my mind! Silk shops also are to be found in Yangi Shahr, but since the 1864 exodus of the Chinese from Turkestan, the silk trade has sadly fallen off. It has always in the past been of great importance to the country. It is rather wonderful to find specimens still extant of eighteen hundred year old silk, trade in which was already flourishing two thousand years ago; and as we enjoy making some happy bargain of a Shantung silk coat at the summer sales, to think that

Shantung bales of silk were being carried along that trade route from China to the westernmost limits of Asia and even to imperial Rome and Greece, via Kashgar, a trade often seriously endangered by the lawless bands of Huns, who were for so many centuries the scourge of Asia as well as of Europe. There is at the British Museum a strip of cream-coloured silk of the first century, on which is inscribed in fine lettering the place of manufacture (Yen Ch'eng, Shantung) the length, width, and price of the bale. Measured by a Chinese boot-maker's foot-rule of the period, it is the same width as a bale of silk found by Sir Aurel Stein in the ruins at Lop Nor (about one foot 10 inches of our standard) and with yet further evidence from other places, seems pretty conclusive proof that there was a uniform standard of width for the silk, which was exported to Central Asia and thence to the west. Although the Chinese foot-measure did not continue a uniform length, the standard width of silk remained the same during the Han period (both before and after the beginning of the Christian era). Among other specimens of silk found by Stein was a little silken envelope about two inches long, which must have contained a letter written on a rolled piece of silk, and the address on it has even been deciphered. This silk trade had a great importance in furthering intercourse with the west, and demanded protection, which may to some extent account for the long line of Chinese forts along the trade route.

The specimens of silk which have been found in various parts of Chinese Turkestan show a remarkable degree of finish, and also are proof of the high

\* For these details I am indebted to "Bushell's Chinese Art," vol i., pp. 136-8.

state of culture and standard of living which existed there at that period. Much earlier, indeed, it had penetrated to Europe, and almost certainly by this route, for Aristotle mentions it as *σηρ* and the Chinese, therefore, were known to the Greeks as *Σηρες*. At that time the Chinese most jealously guarded the secret of its manufacture, and it was only after many centuries that the industry penetrated to India (the eggs of the silkworm were carried, it is said, by a Chinese princess in her head-dress) and was first practised in the valley of the Brahmapootra.

This may seem rather a long digression on the subject of silk, but is permissible, I think, on the ground that the silk trade played so important a rôle in the history of Chinese Turkestan in the past, of which we are continually getting fresh evidence by the archæological work of both British and German experts. The Chinese expert accompanying Sir Aurel Stein, believes that he has recognized the date of one record written on silk, that was discovered near Tun Huang as corresponding with 94 B.C. Other specimens have also been found of silk as used for writing material before the use of paper was known.

We were escorted round the town of Yangi Shahr by a friendly Swedish missionary, who has built a pleasant Swedish house, and a school for boys near the gate, but outside it. The garden was still gay with flowers. He seemed on the happiest terms with his Chinese neighbours, and devotes himself to work among them, while his colleagues in the old city work entirely amongst the Turcomans. We attended a Chinese service in the latter place, which was followed by the leave taking

of a convert, whose patriotism had led him to join the "cummerbasses." He was a farmer, and was greatly concerned at leaving his wife and children unprotected while he was away at Ili, as they had suffered some molestation even before he left, owing to their change of faith. I have recently heard that he has now returned to them in safety, and that in his absence all has gone well. The mission is still too young to have made much progress, and the senior missionary told me regretfully that he had not yet found the key to the hearts of the Turcomans. I observed, however, that the workmen whom he superintended at the building of the new consulate on week days came in good numbers to the church on Sunday, and listened to him with an attention which they accorded to no other of the little band. There are lady missionaries doing medical and school work, but it is all in the initial stages, and they have given a good deal of time to building suitable houses for themselves and their work, which shows their intention to make it permanent. Some have taken part of their training in England, but there are no English missionaries in this part of the country, and I believe only one China Inland Mission Station in the whole province, so it is practically unworked by English societies, and quite inadequately worked by the Swedish, who have only three stations, all within easy reach of one another, and sufficiently well-staffed.

Before we left Kashgar, the Turki wife of the Indian munshi invited us to a little entertainment which she got up for our benefit, and we had the opportunity of seeing the dancing and hearing the music of the country. The

women as well as the men wear tall leather boots with some rather pretty decoration in green leather appliqué work: they also wear shoes over the boots of the same colour, so that they hardly show, and which they always remove on entering a room. The ladies sat on the floor, some of them playing a long instrument, others singing, while they took it in turns to dance a slow and not ungraceful measure. The most attractive figure was a lady in a scarlet silk coatee over a sort of transparent chemise falling below the knee, through which the leather boots were clearly seen, and appeared less clumsy than might have been expected. Marigold blossoms were coquettishly worn on the forehead and over the ears of one lady. Our hostess at intervals opened a thoroughly European cash-box with one of the keys suspended to her long plait of hair, took out a coin which she waved over the head of the dancer, and then deposited in a little tray on the floor beside her. The women are not thought much of in this country; reference has already been made to the bill of divorcement by which the husband may get rid of the wife within twenty-four hours of the marriage! Mohammedanism is certainly not the religion for women, and the new spirit of progress observable in its views of women, granting them not only the possession of a soul, but the chance of education, which is specially seen in India (owing to its contact with Christianity) has not yet penetrated to Turkestan.

Our stay at Kashgar had been somewhat prolonged owing to the difficulty of getting a permit from the Russian Government for Robert to

accompany us to Europe, and as it was extremely difficult to find anyone else reliable, competent, and cognizant of any language we knew to act as courier, we waited for some three weeks. The time indeed, passed all too quickly, and we would gladly have stayed much longer, but winter was approaching, and the journey across the Alai Mountains is not without its hardships, boasting two fairly stiff passes, that of Terek Dawan (12,730 ft.) and Kyzyl-Art (14,015 ft.). Had we still been accompanied by our Tibetan servants we should have got on quite comfortably, but we missed them at every turn, and found that Robert was far less efficient than he had been while under their influence.

We started on a brilliant autumn day, October 25th; the trees were a sheet of gold, and our kind hosts and Swedish friends set us on the road. Our party was reinforced by only one man, called a Kriakash, whose duty it was to see after the pack animals carrying our diminished luggage. He was a thoroughly tiresome fellow, whom Robert refused to coerce, when he would not do as we wished. All the way there are rest houses under Russian control, and a young Russian officer suggested he would like to travel with us so as to save expense. This is effected in a very simple way: there is only *one* room for Europeans in these inns, and they all occupy it, sharing the cost. We declined the friendly (?) offer, but requested that we might know when he would start, so as to start later, as he would certainly not travel slower than we did. Our provisions for the journey had been most lavishly prepared by our kind hostess, and I acted as cook for

the remainder of the time, having a wholesome dread of what the inns might provide, which indeed was not much, though generally we were able to get milk and eggs.

It took us five days to reach the Russian frontier, and some of them were very fatiguing, toiling across stony wastes and over small passes, with wind and blinding dust to try our tempers. We rode ponies, whose spirit had been doubtless spoiled by much toil, and whose paces were not at all pleasant. One night we got belated, and in a dark and forbidding gorge lost track of one another, which caused me great anxiety for about an hour, as I had supposed Miss Macdougall was following close behind; her pony had proved stubborn, and fell a long way to the rear. I sent Robert back to hunt for her while I got fire and food ready, for it was very cold. The old legend of the dangers of night travelling in Turkestan lose none of their haunting power at the present day. Says the immortal Marco Polo, "When travellers are on the move by night and one of them chances to lag behind, or to fall asleep, or the like, when he tries to gain his company again he will hear spirits talking, and will suppose them to be his comrades. Sometimes the spirits will call him by name; and thus shall a traveller oftentimes be led astray, so that he never finds his party. And in this way many have perished. Sometimes the stray travellers will hear, as it were, the tramp and hum of a great cavalcade of people away from the real line of road, and, taking this to be their own company, they will follow the sound; and, when day

breaks, they find that a cheat has been put upon them, and that they are in ill plight. Even in the daytime one hears these spirits talking, and sometimes you shall hear the sound of a variety of musical instruments, and, still more commonly, the sound of drums." This equally applies to the desert, and the spirit of the desert certainly has an uncanny effect even on the most unimaginative natures. Within a drive of Kashgar, we fell under the spell of it, and saw a lovely mirage of shining lake, where in reality was nothing but stony wilderness. The eerie sound of the camels' slow-tolling bells and the long lines of beasts trailing away into the desert heighten the effect.

Gradually we made our way, continually upwards, to the great wall of mountains barring the road to Russian territory. Kashgar lies at a height of 4,043 feet, and we had to climb more than 10,000 feet higher than that. It was thrilling to feel that we were walking in the footsteps of Chinese State envoys and merchants of two thousand years ago, for the annals of the Han dynasty tell us that Chang Ch'ien (123 B.C.) was sent by the Emperor Wu-ti to form an alliance with the Great Yüeh-chih tribe, who were settled on the banks of the Oxus, further westward across the barrier of the Altai Mountains, against the ever-encroaching Huns, whose depredations the Chinese alone seem to have had any success in checking. From that date onwards the Chinese appear to have kept to this route to the west and used it for trade purposes. It passed through Turfan and the chain of oases on the northern border

of the Takla Makan desert. As we neared the frontier we came to little Chinese fortresses, reminding one of the chain of fortresses of which Sir Aurel Stein has found such interesting ruins all along the southern trade route of the same date, linking China not only by Yarkand and Kashgar to Ferghana and Sogdiana, but also southward with Tibet and India, marking the set purpose of the Chinese to extend their borders westward, just as now the set purpose of the Russians is to extend theirs eastward.

As we neared the frontier, we came to a small Chinese town, and also passed two unimposing, but quite recently built little fortresses. It is difficult to see what use they would be in case of war, their mud-brick walls would offer no resistance to an attacking force of the meanest order, but perhaps it is meant as an indication of "j'y suis, j'y reste" and to mark their possessions, for they are always being pushed further south. The Russians on the northern side of the mountain barrier are steadily colonising, which means taking possession of the fertile parts of the country and driving the Nomads across the border into Chinese territory. The Kirghiz tribes are still very numerous and require large areas for breeding purposes. One Chinese official on the border stated that a thousand families had pushed across that season. They are the most picturesque sight as they travel with long caravans of camels, on which the women sit like queens, striking figures with their lofty white coifs and handsome coral and silver jewellery. Many a time we saw

mothers carrying across their knees the large wooden cradles containing their babes. Little children ran fearlessly among the grunting camels, laden with household possessions, and big felt tents. These interested us a good deal, as they are by no means the simple structures one is accustomed to suppose. There is an elaborate framework, about ten to twelve feet in height, and a sort of metal cage at the top through which the smoke of the fires ascends, and which can be covered with a felt in case of bad weather. Over the framework is stretched a felt, made of camel's hair, which is often ornamented with a coloured design outside, and kept in position by ropes; also there is an ornamented curtain in place of a door. Inside the tent are various stores of bedding, quilts, boxes of clothes, and a part of the tent is screened off for the food supply, which largely consists of milk, whey, and curds. These tents are by no means uncomfortable to live in, and are generally pretty clean and very warm. We were greatly interested to see at Merv permanent structures, which had so perfectly reproduced the old style, and one can well understand that the Kirghiz who could forego the old nomadic life would yet cling to the old familiar "yurt" rather than imitate his neighbour's house. The Kirghiz are governed by their own rulers and pay no taxes, though some of them possess immense flocks of fat-tailed sheep and are great stock breeders. They have some trade relations both with China and Russia, which are mainly carried on by barter. The Karakirghiz number about



KIRGHIZ TENTS.



MERV.



800,000, not to mention the closely-allied tribes of the Kazaks, numbering in all some three millions.

The sixth day after leaving Kashgar we reached the frontier at Irkes-tan, which boasts a Russian fort and arsenal, a post office, and custom house, where we were charmingly welcomed by a kind young couple, who gave us most grateful hospitality. We greatly regretted we had no language in common, but their cheerful baby made a good link between us. It took half a day to get our things passed through the custom house and passports viséd. A German-speaking official came in to make sundry inquiries, and we were glad to have his help to express our gratitude to our hosts, who were not up when we made an early start next morning.

The most arduous part of our journey was crossing the Terek Dawan, a pass of 13,500 feet, which was so steep that the ponies even found it difficult, and one went rolling down the snowy northern side till we felt he must have most of his bones broken when he landed amongst some

rocks; but, no, the men clambered down after him, and as soon as he was released from his load he just shook himself and was ready to continue his journey. One woman rode unconcernedly down with a little child on either side of her in packing cases. It was a superb view from the top, looking down into the gulf below, where long strings of ponies, almost hidden beneath their snowy bales of cotton, looked like ants as they disappeared down the ravine. We still had other, but less formidable, passes to cross before reaching Andijan, the railway terminus. The country was much more beautiful than on the southern side of the range, but it is the charm of the people's kindly dealings with us in Chinese Turkestan which will always remain engraved on our memories, and which will some day, I hope, lure us back to that land full of hidden treasure, which is continually being carried away to European museums to bring fresh knowledge of its history and art to those who can never see that country.









