

Six months had passed away when behold Demetrius, one of the original comrades of his journey, who had stayed behind at Cabul, arrived at Hiarchan. Benedict and Isaac the Armenian, were greatly delighted at his arrival; but their joy was of short continuance, for very soon after this Demetrius caused our friend a great deal of trouble. At that time, with the king's leave, one of the merchants was elected mock emperor, whilst all the rest, according to a custom of theirs, paid homage to him and offered him presents. Demetrius, to save his pocket, held back; and as the emperor had the power of putting rebels against his authority in irons, or even of flogging them, Demetrius had great difficulty in escaping both penalties. Our Benedict, however, by his good management, arranged the whole matter, for his intercession and a small present got pardon for Demetrius. A greater peril also befel the party, when thieves broke into the house, and laid hold of the Armenian whom they tied up, putting a dagger to his throat to prevent his giving the alarm. The noise however roused Benedict and Demetrius, and the robbers made off.

On another occasion Benedict had gone away to get his loan repaid by the mother of the Prince of QUOTAN.<sup>1</sup> Her capital was ten days' journey distant, and what with going and coming, a month had passed and he was still absent. So the Saracens took occasion by this to spread false reports of Benedict's being dead, alleging him to have been put to

Kabul. He also was greatly taken with the readings from the Scriptures (*ib.*)

<sup>1</sup> Khotan, which may be considered the most central and inaccessible state of all Asia, was a seat of very ancient civilisation, and was already in friendly relations with China in 140 B.C. In the fourth century of our era Buddhism was in high development here. Though much of the surface appears to be rugged mountain, it is interspersed with levels which are both fruitful and populous. At this time, like the other states of Eastern Turkestan, it was under a Mahomedan chief of Turkish or Mongol descent. Khotan is the subject of a short chapter in Marco Polo. In modern times its only European visitor has been Adolphus Schlagintweit, who never returned to tell his tale.