

mother and showed her the royal rescript, which she looked on with great respect. To her he presented some little things such as women like, a looking glass, India muslin, and so forth. He was also sent for by the boy's governor who conducted the administration.

In this journey one of the pack horses belonging to our merchant fell into a very rapid river. In fact having broken the rope with which its feet (I know not why) were tied, it made off and crossed to the other side of the river. Benedict feeling the loss a serious one invoked the name of Jesus; and the horse of his own accord swam back to join the others, and our friend, delivered from the anticipated misfortune, returned thanks for the benefit vouchsafed. On this part of the journey they crossed the desert which is called CARACATHAI, or the Black Land of the Cathayans, because 'tis said that the people so called long sojourned there.¹

At this town (Acsu) they had to wait fifteen days for the arrival of the rest of the merchants. At last they started, and travelled to OITOGRACH GAZO, CASCANI, DELLAI, SAREGABEDAL, and UGAN, after which they got to CUCIA,² another small town at which they halted a whole month to

¹ *Kara-Khitai* has already been spoken of and the origin of the name indicated in connection with an extract from Rubriques (*supra*, pp. 176-8), and its people are mentioned by Plano Carpini under the translated name of *Nigri Kitai* (pp. 750-1). The extent of the territory to which the name applied probably varied considerably, but its nucleus or axis rather seems to have been the range of the Thian Shan. Here it is applied to the desert south of that chain. The name has come down to modern times, for we find it applied in 1811 (*Khara-Kitat*) to a portion of the inhabitants of the Ili country (*Klaproth, Mag. Asiatique* 1, 209).

² None of these places except the last can be traced either in the Chinese routes given in the *Russians in Central Asia*, or in the route set down by Mir Izzet Ullah, Moorcroft's explorer. *Kucha* itself is a place of some importance, containing according to Timkowski's information about one thousand houses, and considered by the Chinese to be the key of this part of Turkestan. The Chinese route says "a very large town, composed of one hundred thousand (!) houses, occupied by Musulmans; six hundred Chinese soldiers."