

brought from the 'New Dominion'. This meant much loss of time as well as some rather severe lessons in patience.

It was easier to settle accounts with the owners of the hired camels from Mirān, the use of which had helped to bring our own animals through without loss and still fit for fresh work, and with Abdurrahīm, whose magnificent camels had proved such a mainstay for our survey operations in the Lop desert. They all soon started on the return journey by the mountain route, but not before I had obtained from that hardy and ever cheery hunter (Fig. 203) whatever information he could offer about those parts of the Kuruk-tāgh to which I proposed to extend our survey work of the next winter. The preliminary guidance thus afforded and Abdurrahīm's readily promised help had a great share in subsequently assuring the safe execution of the programme that I had prepared for Lāl Singh's operations.

Prepara-
tions for
next
winter's
surveys.

But what occupied my mind most during those days at Tun-huang was the thought of the famous cave-temples of the 'Thousand Buddhas' south-east of the oasis and of the walled-up chapel where in 1907 I had been fortunate enough to secure such abundance of ancient manuscripts and pictorial remains from a great hoard hidden away early in the eleventh century.⁶ I knew well that so rich a *trouvaille* was not to be expected now. Yet I felt sincere gratification when on the very morning after our arrival at Tun-huang my earliest visitor proved to be Wang Tao-shih, the quaint little Taoist monk, whose pious zeal had brought about the first discovery of the hoard. For his discreet consideration when it came to making its treasures accessible to research, I had every reason to feel grateful. It was a comfort to feel assured by renewed personal contact that the relations of the good priest with the pious folk of Tun-huang had in no way suffered through our little transaction, though it could not have remained long secret.

Contact
renewed
with Wang
Tao-shih.

I have already related in *Serindia* the fate of that portion of the hoard which Wang Tao-shih's fears and scruples would not allow in 1907 to pass, under my care, into safe keeping at a certain shrine of learning in distant *Ta-ying-kuo*.⁷ When, a year after my own visit, Professor Paul Pelliot had gained access to, and searched, what remained of the hoard, with all the advantages offered by his great Sinologue knowledge, he carried off a considerable selection of its manuscript treasures via Peking. The attention of the authorities at the capital had thus been attracted to the old library, and its transfer there was decreed. Of the careless and in reality destructive fashion in which the order had been carried out, I had received an inkling already at Kāshgar and Khotan, through scattered rolls of Buddhist *chings*, manifestly derived from the Ch'ien-fo-tung hoard, which had found their way into the hands of Chinese officials and in a few instances had been presented to Sir George Macartney and others. At Tun-huang it was not long before some unknown Chinese well-wisher presented himself with a fairly large packet of manuscript rolls from the same source which he was anxious to dispose of. Judging from the very modest compensation which induced him to return later with more, I was able to conclude that the article was not altogether a rarity in the local market.

Chinese
MSS. from
Wang Tao-
shih's
hoard.

Wang Tao-shih, with a bitterness only too justified, explained how, on the arrival of the order transmitted from Lan-chou Fu, the collection of manuscripts from his jealously guarded cella had been carelessly bundled into six carts and carried off to the Tun-huang Hsien Ya-mên. Of the large sum which, he declared, had been assigned by the Central Government to his temple as a compensation, nothing whatever reached him, the money having been appropriated by needy hands while in transit through the different Ya-mêns. Some delay occurred before the carts were dispatched from the Tun-huang Ya-mên, and this offered a convenient opportunity for local people to help themselves gratis to 'souvenirs', before the old monastic store of texts left their

Removal
of MSS. to
Peking.

⁶ See *Serindia*, ii. pp. 801 sqq.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, ii. pp. 826 sqq.