

that once on the ground I might be allowed by the Russian authorities to extend my visit farther south towards the upper course of the Oxus. But knowing that access to these parts had not been previously granted to British travellers I had not specifically included them in my programme.

More than a year before my return to Kāshgar I had, while in Kansu, requested the Foreign Department of the Indian Government to secure for me the special permission of the Russian Government to travel through Russian Turkestan. On April 14th, 1915, I learned to my great relief from the Indian Foreign Department that the requisite permission had been secured through H.B.M.'s Embassy at Petrograd. But on arriving at Kāshgar I found that Prince Mestchersky, the Russian Consul-General, had received no information on the subject. By the third week of June, as a result of telegraphic application made direct to H.B.M.'s Ambassador, he received instructions to permit me to enter Russian territory, but without any indication of the route I might be allowed to follow. Fortunately Prince Mestchersky, an enlightened official, proved ready to further my scientific aims, and on the strength of a telegram from Sir George Buchanan received by myself at the close of June reporting the approval of my tour by the Russian Foreign Office, issued a special permit enabling me to visit the Pāmīrs and all tracts along the Oxus. He in addition kindly provided me with most useful recommendations to the various Russian officers holding political charge in that region. For all this I am anxious to record here my deep sense of gratitude to Prince Mestchersky.

Russian  
permission  
secured.

During my stay at Kāshgar I was re-joined by the two Surveyors whom, since leaving Korla, I had detailed on routes separate from my own. R. B. Lāl Singh had carried his plane-table work as close to the crest of the T'ien-shan range as the season and transport conditions would permit. From Ak-su onwards I had been able to arrange for his proceeding by a new route which led him over ground almost wholly unsurveyed, through the utterly arid hill ranges of the outermost T'ien-shan east and west of the small oasis of Kelpin.<sup>2</sup> Two weeks later Muḥammad Yāqūb also arrived safely. During a trying journey of over two months he had carried his plane-table work, somewhat rough as usual, along the left bank of the Tārīm from near the Konche-daryā to above Yārkanḍ. Our camels which came with him had suffered a good deal from the heat of the season and from difficulties of the ground caused by the spring inundations along the riverine belt. Yet in spite of this and the hardships undergone by them during close on two years' work, mostly in desert regions, I was able subsequently to dispose of them at Yārkanḍ with practically no loss to the Indian Government.

Surveyors  
re-join.

On the 6th of July I at last found it possible to leave Kāshgar, after completing all arrangements for the safe passage of the eighty heavy camel-loads of antiques to India. But the summer floods in the K'un-lun valleys, due to the melting glaciers, would not as yet allow of the departure of this valuable convoy towards the Kara-koram passes. I was accordingly able to let Lāl Singh, to whose care I had to entrust it, set out meanwhile with me for a survey of the high snowy mountain chain which continues the Muz-tāgh-atā range to the head-waters of the Kāshgar river south-east of the Alai. Our route was the same as far as the prosperous oasis of Ōpal, and on the way to it, some miles beyond the suburbs of Kāshgar, the faithful Chiang Ssū-yeh (Fig. 355) awaited me to bid me farewell in time-honoured Chinese fashion. The reunion at his Ho-nan home or in Kashmīr that we both fondly hoped for was not to be granted by Fate; for in the spring of 1922 the best scholar who ever helped me in Asia passed away at his post in Kāshgar.

Departure  
from  
Kāshgar.

Lāl Singh proceeded from Ōpal westwards to the head-waters of the Kizil-daryā or Kāshgar river. Thence he made his way round the northern end of the above-mentioned snowy range

Survey on  
Kāshgar R.  
head-  
waters.

<sup>2</sup> See Maps Nos. 7, 4, 5.