

is situated not far from the river's bank. Here Mr Macartney, the British Political Agent, has lived for 16 years. His Chinese blood, inherited from his mother, and his long service have bound him closely to this country. When you watch his selfcontrolled, correct, dark-complexioned figure and hear him talk with sympathy and devotion of this community with its mud huts and peculiar conditions, you realise that he belongs to this country more than any European could and that, if fate should ever remove him to some other place, he would pine for his quiet, his books and his flowers in the China Bags gardens. He knows the country and its people and history as no other European does. Without any fuss or unnecessary talk he labours systematically and perseveringly, promoting the interests of Britain, or rather India, in Kashgaria. In struggling with great natural difficulties he can only approach his goal step by step. With admirable perseverance roads have been built over well-nigh inaccessible mountains and opportunities have been created for Indian trade.

Outwardly Kashgar closely resembles the Sart towns in Russian Turkestan. The same covered bazaars, the same booths, craftsmen, one-storeyed mud houses etc. The town itself is surrounded by a crenellated mud wall, about 17 feet high, outside which many suburbs have grown up, giving it the appearance of a fortress. The barracks, the houses of the local officials, a few Chinese shops and an occasional Chinese walking about remind you that you are on Chinese soil. There is much traffic in the streets, especially on a Thursday, the day of the bazaar. The rural population comes to town on that day in large numbers to do its shopping. All the shops are open and the best wares are displayed. On other weekdays many shops are often closed. The Sart is lazy and content to live for the passing hour, from hand to mouth. If he earns something to-day, he will do no more work so long as the money lasts. During the melon season, in particular, his inclination to do nothing is at its height. He enjoys the excellent juicy fruit and sings and plays far into the night. Trade is lively in Kashgar, especially trade with Russia, the whole of whose imports and exports to Kashgaria pass through this town. The occupation of a merchant is respected above all others. A native will make great sacrifices in order to enter the ranks of the merchants. He often incurs liabilities that he cannot possibly meet in order to obtain the credit he needs for starting his little business. Intentionally he values his goods too highly or offers property as security to which he only has a very doubtful title or possibly none at all in order, often on very hard terms, to get the business going that is to provide the prestige on which he bases his future. The security which it should, of course, be easy to check up on in this small community, is always accepted by the other party whose business is probably built on an equally shaky foundation. The entire system of trade is based on a widespread and far from effective system of credit. The date of maturity simply means the time at which you begin to postpone payment on every imaginable pretext. It is, no doubt, owing to such peculiar conditions that no large Russian trading company has been able to establish direct business in this country, the whole Russian trade being in the hands of several hundred natives of Russian Turkestan. A prominent position in the ranks of the merchants is occupied by »Tchar bazartchi», pedlars of a sort, who wander

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