



*A passage in the almshouse of Yarkand. Note the goitre which is characteristic in this locality.*

to pieces. Each part of the wall that collapses, to mingle with the dust on the ground, could tell the present generation of shopkeepers some incident from the uncommonly bloody history of their country with its deceit, treason, murder and indescribable barbarity. Its semi-ruined condition considerably enhances the picturesqueness of the surroundings of the town.

Russian and British trade seem to be waging a severe battle for supremacy in Yarkand. Russia has cheaper transport in her favour, but India has the advantage of being the only supplier of certain goods that are sufficiently valuable to justify the high cost of transport. According to the calculations of the Russian aksakal about 1,500 horses with goods to a value of about 500 roubles per horse reach Yarkand from India over Le annually, while 2,500 horses at 200 roubles per horse come from Turkestan over Kashgar. The cost of transport per horse from India amounts to about 30 roubles, from Turkestan to 12—17 roubles. In recent years the imports from India have increased annually by about 200 horses and the cost of transport has been brought down from 50—60 roubles to about 30 roubles per horse.

Wholesale trade is done in the yards of the sarais, where, according to local conditions, comparatively large stocks are collected. Here, indeed, a colourful picture is presented by merchants from Turkestan, from the different towns of Kashgaria, Afghanistan and India with their varying fine types and bright national costumes. The trade of each country has its own regular sarais more or less, but when business is in full swing you see the most amazingly contrasted types in the same yard. I lived in a large brick sarai, the only one in the town built of baked bricks. My men and I occupied three small, dark cubicles, the faint light coming through the door and a window above it half screened by a thick wooden grill. A stove of sorts, that could not be closed but luckily did not smoke, enabled us to be