

Kashgar, made himself very useful to me, and greatly impressed me. He struck me as a born soldier: strong-willed, capable, and made to command. He and many of the traders of the place—Afghans, Peshawuris, Badakhshis, and others—were with me nearly the whole day long during my few days' stay in Kashgar. Tea and fruit were always ready, and they used to sit round and talk. The Afghan's conversation was mostly of fighting, and of rifles and revolvers. Every kind of firearm he seemed to know, and to have his own opinion about it as to its efficiency. The Russian Berdan rifle he seemed to prefer to our Martini, and he thought the Americans made better revolvers than we did. At the time the Chinese re-took Kashgar he was in the town, and said there was practically no fighting. Yakoob Beg had died, or been poisoned, away westward some weeks before, and he being dead, there was no one to lead the defence, and the people of the country were absolutely apathetic. What soldiers there were, when they heard the Chinese were close to the town, hastily threw aside their uniforms or disguises as soldiers, and, assuming the dress of cultivators, walked about the fields in a lamb-like and innocent manner. The Chinese entered the town, and everything went on as if nothing had happened—the shopkeeper sold his wares, and the countryman ploughed his fields, totally indifferent as to who was or who was not in power in Kashgar. Only the ruling classes were affected, and most of them had fled.

The Afghan merchants would often talk, too, of our last war with them. Some of them had fought against us. They asked me one day where "Ropert" was. I did not quite understand at first who or what they meant. But they explained that he (it was a person apparently) was a first-rate man to fight, and then it struck me that they meant General Roberts. They had a great admiration for him. One of them said that he had set out from Kandahar to Kabul, but on the way had "met" General Roberts, and had returned. I was told