

## CHAPTER VII.

## THROUGH TURKESTAN TO YARKAND.

My first inquiries on arrival were as to whether Colonel Bell had arrived. I had reached Hami some weeks later than the date on which, in the Legation at Peking, we had fixed to meet here, but still he had had a long round to travel, and might have been late too. I was disappointed to find that he had passed through about three weeks before, and must now be well on his way to India.

My next inquiries were as to the means of reaching Kashgar, the principal town at the western extremity of Turkestan, and the time it would take to reach there. The result of the inquiries was unsatisfactory. Difficulties, of course, arose. It was the hot season, and carters would not hire out their carts. In any case it would take seventy days to reach there, and this would bring us to the end of Sep-