

had been reached. For the rest of the way I should be, so to speak, on my return. Kashgar was well known, too, from the Indian side, and there was a Russian consul stationed there. So when I reached the place I appeared to have arrived again on the fringes of civilisation.

Passing through the native town, we put up at an inn on the southern side. I sent my card and passport to the yamen, and very shortly afterwards the Afghan Aksakal and a number of Indian traders came to see me. These Aksakals are men selected by the Chinese from among the traders of each country as their representatives. They are responsible for reporting any new arrivals, and all dealings with their countrymen are carried on by the Chinese through them. They correspond to a certain extent to consuls, and perform some of the functions of a consul, but they are appointed and removed at the pleasure of the Chinese. This Afghan Aksakal, though he was afterwards suspected of having sheltered the murderer of Mr. Dalglish (to whom I will refer presently), and had to leave Kashgar, made himself most useful, and greatly impressed me.