

The crowds lining the road near the city gate were generally very well and warmly clad and behaved with remarkable quietness. The variety of race types was a very marked feature in the general appearance of the multitude, and next to this the almost universal prevalence of goitre. We passed into the city through its main bazaars, and out again, then across an open space of about a couple of furlongs to a detached fort, the Yangishahr or New Town. Here we were saluted at the gate by the guard and presently found ourselves in the quarters prepared for us. They were the same as those occupied by me on the occasion of my former visit, but the accommodation had been increased by the erection of five or six new quarters within the same area.

All the rooms were nicely furnished and everything was done to make us comfortable, not to forget the dastarkhwan, which here grew to ninety-two dishes and trays.

The day following we paid a visit to the Dadakhwah, the Governor of this city and district. His palace adjoined our own quarters, and was approached through three courtyards, each with its own guard of matchlockmen, great burly figures, all boots and bundle, for such was the appearance of their forms gathered in about the middle as their flowing robes of stark bright patterns were by the loose folds of a waistband.

The Dadkhwah, Mahammad Yunus Jan, on our approaching his audience chamber, a spacious hall with a gaudily painted roof, the decorations bearing the impress of Khokundi art, came out into the verandah to meet us, and after the usual introduction conducted us up the length of the hall to the cushions ranged at its upper end. After the interchange of the customary compliments and ceremonies, the presents were brought in, admired and examined. The court officials then brought in fruits and sweets, and tea was served round. A brief conversation then closed the interview and we returned to our quarters.

From my former experience of our relations with the people of Yarkand, I was curious and rather anxious to see how we should be treated. Hitherto it had not been the custom to allow foreigners to move about with unrestricted freedom. Messrs. Shaw and Hayward had been kept close prisoners to their quarters during the whole period of their sojourn in the country, and when the former expedition of 1870 entered the city of Yarkand an attempt was made to prevent the English officers from going out. The most disquieting rumours and sinister prophesies had been promulgated regarding the reception which awaited this mission, and though we had been able to trace them to their source, still it was just possible that there was some foundation of truth. It was with no small anxiety then that I watched the slightest action of our hosts, and I found it advisable to issue the strictest orders to prevent any sort of offence being given by our followers.

We had come provided with every kind of scientific apparatus, but it was more than probable that theodolites, photographic cameras, &c., might be looked on as only instruments of the black art. I therefore enjoined on one and all the utmost caution, and decided that until we reached the royal presence, and had an opportunity of explaining the harmless nature of our scientific instruments, they should not be used. I also gave orders, which were strictly enforced during our whole stay in the country, for a roll-call of all followers to be held twice a day, and none were allowed to be out of camp after half-past 7 P.M., nor were any permitted to go into the bazaars without permission from Ressaïdar Afzul Khan, whose duty it was to see that the men were decently dressed and behaved themselves properly. To these precautions and to the sense of being kept under tight discipline, I attribute in a great measure the remarkable freedom from trouble which we enjoyed. The total number of followers was 120, and I am happy to be able to record that, during a period of seven months we were in Kashghar territory, not more than twenty-two punishments were inflicted.

Our first appearance in the streets of Yarkand excited the lively curiosity of the inhabitants, and the scene was particularly interesting. Entering the city by the Altun or golden gate, we turned to the right and passed down the butcher's street, where, suspended in front of the shops, such as may be seen in a butcher's stall at home, we saw good beef, mutton, yak's and horse flesh, the head or tail of the animal being left attached to the carcase to indicate the kind of meat.