

The river Kizzil flows under the walls of the fort. Where I crossed it on the road from Kashghar it is 100 feet wide, level with the bank, but flows here in a greatly diminished stream about 25 feet wide between high banks, 20 feet below the level of the surrounding country. Its character was so altered that it was only after repeated assurances from the people that I satisfied myself as to its being the same stream.

Close outside the fort is a palace lately built by the Ameer, who often stays here on his way to and from Aksu.

The natives of the district are called Dolans: they have a more Tartar-like cast of countenance than Yarkandees and Kashgharees, and are said to be distinguished by their fondness for music and singing. They are said to be descended from prisoners brought in the fourth century of the Hijra by Haroun Bugra Khan from Transoxiana, and forcibly settled in the country between Maralbashi and Kuchar. In the jungle villages they excavate houses out of the ground, making grass roofs level with the surface. The term Dolan is, I believe, applied generally to people of mixed parentage.

The present Hakim Beg of Maralbashi, Ata Bai, has the title of Mirakhor. He is an Andijani, about 35 years of age, with especially pleasant address, and seems much liked by the people, who all speak well of him. He was not in Maralbashi when I first arrived, having been away for 10 months with the troops at Orumchi and Manass. Four days after my arrival he returned with about 120 men.

In Ata Bai's absence I was received by the Deputy Governor, Mulla Samsakh, who showed me every attention. The whole of the public robot was placed at my disposal, and all supplies I stood in need of were furnished.

On one occasion a man forced his way into my room and rather rudely demanded in Persian a turban as a present, similar to one I had given another man the day before. He told me that he was the Mulla Alayar, and a Cazee, and reiterated his demand for the turban in a very impudent way. I told him that I was not in the habit of giving turbans to people who asked for them, and he went away as abruptly as he had entered. I sent for the Punjabashi and told him that I did not like people coming into my room without invitation, and would never give anything if I was asked for it. He said it should not happen again, and half an hour afterwards I received a message from the Mulla Samsakh, saying that I should not be troubled again, and that the Cazee had been severely beaten for his insolence. I was told afterwards that the punishment had given great satisfaction in the bazaar, where Mulla Alayar was disliked on account of his constantly asking people for things which they dared not refuse.

At Maralbashi I found a Punjabee, named Gholam Khadir, serving as a soldier. His son, a sharp lad of 13 years of age, was sent over to stay in the robot to interpret for my servants. I told him I should like to see his father, who accordingly came over the same evening. I had a long and interesting conversation with him, in which he told me his history as follows:—“Two years ago I left Sealkote with six ponies laden with merchandize to sell at Leh. When I arrived there I found no sale for my goods, so I resolved to come on to Yarkand, being advised to do so by Mr. Shaw. In crossing the Suget Pass all my ponies perished, much snow having fallen, and I lost everything. There was only my son, the boy you have seen, with me, and a servant who went mad with the troubles of the journey. Another trader helped me on to Sanju, and from there the Hakim forwarded me on to Yarkand. I was taken before the Dadkhwah, who was very good to me, and gave me two hundred tangas and some clothes, and told me I should go back to the Punjab in the spring. When I again went before him in the spring, he told me I ought to be married, that everybody in the country was married. I protested that I had a wife in Sealkote, but he said that did not matter, and sent for a Mulla, who was ordered to find me a wife, and I was married whether I would or no (“zubber-dustee”). When all my money was gone, I went again to the Dadkhwah, who sent me to Kashghar, where I was recognised by Mirza Shadee who had seen me in Sealkote. I used to make medicines and give them to people at Sealkote, and gave some to Mirza Shadee when he was there. I once gave some to Ata Bai, the Hakim here, and cured him. He gave me a robe and eight tangas for it. I was taken before the Atalik, who asked me what I could do, I answered that I doctored people. He asked me if I would serve him, I dared not refuse,