

ghan, and lies close to the junction of routes to Murghabi, Tashkurghan, Kashgar, Yangi Hissar, and Yarkand. There is said to be excellent grazing in the vicinity, and Russia was credited with the design of forming a bazaar at that place in order to attract the trade from the large towns. The bazaar, however, would certainly have given place to a fort, and the traders to Cossacks. The Taotai, in accordance with the usual Chinese method, delayed to settle the matter in either way; but in February, 1899, M. Petrovsky precipitated matters by telling Wong, the official in charge of the foreign trade at Kashgar, that Russia intended to seize Tagharma. This intimation was telegraphed to the Futai, who ordered troops to be at once despatched from Kashgar to the spot. When M. Petrovsky asked the Taotai for what purpose the troops had been sent, he was told that they had no other purpose in view than to cultivate the soil. Nothing seems to have come of these negotiations, for the rumour which I heard in the spring of 1899, that the Chinese had granted the request of the Kanjuts, was not confirmed. Sooner or later, however, the whole province of Sin-Chiang will fall under the sway of Russia. The benevolent government of the Czar will some day step in on some pretext to relieve China of an unprofitable possession, or to protect the natives from injustice and extortion, or to quell an insurrection with which the Chinese troops will be pronounced powerless to cope. Should this last pretext be adopted, the Chinese administration would have itself to thank; for insurrection is about the last course to which the natives would of their own accord resort. Any riots and disturbances which occur are got up by the officials for the purpose of inflicting injury on foreigners. The population have no fighting courage, no arms, no leaders, are totally incapable of combined action, and, so far as the government of their own country is concerned,