

crumbling stone walls enclosing a wide area around a tumbledown Chinese fort and what has now dwindled to a mere little village (Fig. 17). Then I moved on to Kashgar north-eastwards by the direct route across the high Chichiklik plateau, close on 15,000 feet high. It led past the flank of the great Muz-tagh-ata massif and over a succession of minor passes. Rapid as my marches had to be—I covered the distance of close on 180 miles in six days, in spite of difficulties caused by melting snows and flooded streams—I traced unmistakable topographical and archaeological evidence which showed that the route was the same which Hsüan-tsang, my Chinese patron saint, had followed more than twelve centuries before.

At Kashgar, under the hospitable roof of my old friend Mr. (now Sir) George Macartney, the representative of the Indian Government, I was kept exceedingly busy by a host of practical tasks connected with the organization of my caravan, purchase of ponies and camels, etc. Mr. Macartney's kind offices, supported by his great personal influence, secured the goodwill of the provincial Chinese Government for my explorations. But it was a service of quite as great importance when he recommended to me a qualified Chinese secretary in the person of Chiang Ssü-yeh (Fig. 20). It had not been very difficult for me before to acquire a fair colloquial knowledge of Eastern Turki, the language spoken by the people of Chinese Turkestan. But for a serious study of Chinese, the language of its rulers and administrators, I regret I never had had needful leisure.

It was a piece of real good fortune which gave me in Chiang Ssü-yeh not merely an excellent teacher and secretary but a devoted helpmate ever ready to face hardships