

own length. It was a cultivator who had been sentenced to this punishment some months ago for grievously assaulting a neighbour. Cruel as the weight of the chain looked, I could not help thinking that the mode of punishment had its practical advantages. Instead of being imprisoned the man could remain with his family and follow any occupation not requiring quick movements. At the same time the sight of the inconvenient appendage he has to carry must act as a sufficient deterrent to others, and the guilt of the culprit is constantly brought to notice.

On the morning of the 13th of October I was just about to start from my camp at Yokakun for Khotan when the Beg arrived whom the Amban, on hearing of my approach, had deputed to escort me. The Beg was in his Chinese gala garb and had his own little retinue. So we made quite a cavalcade, even before Badruddin Khan, the head of the Afghan merchants in Khotan and a large trader to Ladak, joined me a few miles from Khotan town with some of his fellow-countrymen. I rode round the bastioned walls of the great square fort that forms the "New City" of the Chinese, and then through the outskirts of the "Old City" to the garden belonging to Tokhta Akhun, a rich merchant, which Badruddin Khan had previously taken up for my residence. The narrow Bazars passed on the way were more than usually squalid. The number of people afflicted with diseases whom I saw in them was also depressing. In the garden which lay close to the southern edge of the suburb of Gujan I found a large though somewhat gloomy house, but none of the attractions of my Yarkand residence. The maze of little rooms all lit from the roof and badly deficient in ventilation could not be used for my own quarters. Outside in the garden there was a picturesque wilderness of trees and bushes, but little room for a tent and still less of privacy. So after settling down for the day and despatching my messages and presents for the Amban, I used the few remaining hours of daylight for a reconnaissance