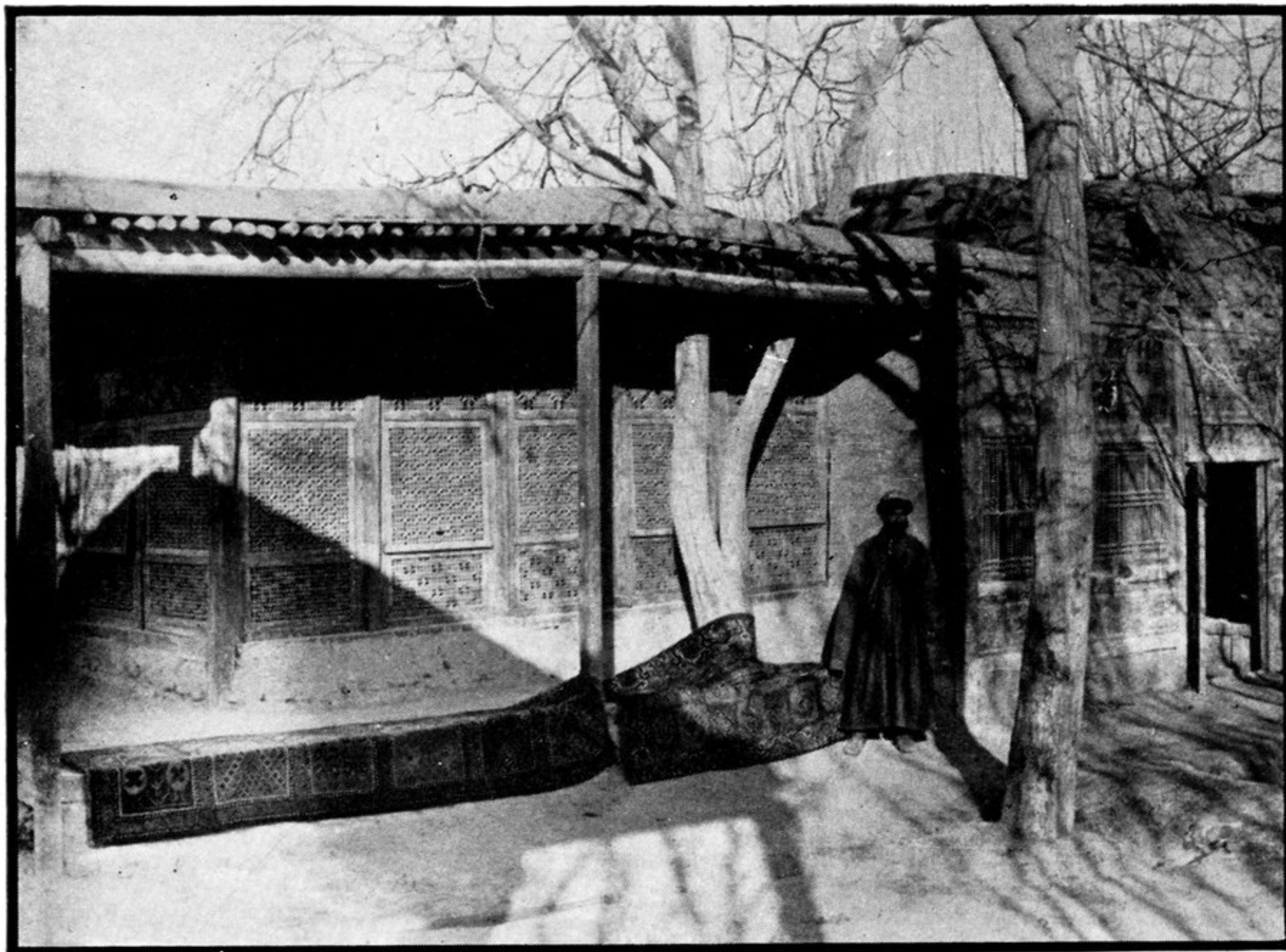


that was to show me the immediate environs, and also a more congenial camping-ground.

There is a charm about the ease with which, in these parts, one may invade the house of any one, high or low, sure to find a courteous reception, whether the visit is expected or otherwise. So when after a long ride through suburban lanes and along the far-stretching lines of mud-built fortifications



HOUSE OF TOKHTA AKHUN, KHOTAN.

erected after the last revolt against the Chinese, but already crumbling into ruin, I came about half a mile from Tokhta Akhun's upon another residential garden, enclosed by high walls and surrounded by fields, I did not hesitate to have my visit announced to the owner. Through a series of courts I entered a large and airy reception hall, and through it passed into a large open garden that at once took my fancy. Akhun Beg, a fine-looking, portly old gentleman, received me like a