

occur very rarely ; but there is always the chance of sudden wealth, and this suffices to attract at all times ' Bais,' *i.e.*, small capitalists from Khotan and other Turkestan towns. They engage parties of labourers, ten to thirty strong, from among the poorest of the agricultural class, and set them to work on a digging of proportionate size. The men receive food, clothing, and six Khotan Tangas (say two Rupees) as monthly pay. They have no share in the jade finds, but get extra rewards in case of special profits. According to Wang-Daloi's testimony, many never see any return for the money they have sunk in these mining ventures. Yet from time to time great hits are made. A Kashgar Bai, whom I found at one of the diggings superintending his twenty men, acknowledged that during the last three years he had cleared a hundred Yambus of silver (say Rs. 13,000) worth of jade at an expense of some thirty Yambus.

Though the Chinese administration exercises no control whatsoever over the jade mining, "claims" once opened are scrupulously respected by other prospectors. I saw diggings which had been left partially unexploited for many years ; yet I was assured that the right of the original workers would never be disputed. None of the diggings went to a greater depth than twenty feet from the surface ; lower down, I assume, the water from the river would probably percolate and stop the work. The flat deposits along the river banks for a day's journey up the valley, up to the point where the latter becomes a narrow gorge, are visited by jade-diggers. But the work is carried on only intermittently and by small parties at the various points which bear the general designation of 'Kumat.' Now in the winter months only about two hundred men were engaged in mining, and even in the summer, when the privations of life in this barren region are less, the number probably is not more than doubled.

Quite distinct from this jade-mining, the ancient industry of "fishing" for jade in the river bed after the summer floods still continues all along the valley above Jamada, just as described in the old Chinese chronicles. No capital is wanted for this kind of