

and Chogalma, showed as little sign of human habitation as the rest of the jungle we had been traversing. But our guide the 'Darogha' knew the camping-places of the shepherds and always managed to produce some of this folk to help in collecting fuel. The days were hazy, and the murky atmosphere made me regret the clear, bracing air of the desert.

On January 12th, about noon, I arrived at Bostan Langar, a tiny hamlet in the midst of a wide, marshy plain where the river gathers the outflow of numerous springs. Now all the water-logged ground was hard-frozen, and there was no need to follow the turns and bends by which the road avoids quagmires. At Bostan Langar I was met by Abdullah Khan, an Afghan merchant from Pishin, who had been settled in Keriya for some fifteen years. He was a fine-looking old man and evidently anxious to make himself useful to the 'Sahibs,' towards whom he, like his fellow-countrymen all over Turkestan, pretends to cherish a feeling of allegiance. Unfortunately disease seems to have played havoc with his constitution, and his utility was further impaired by a strange confusion of tongues. Persian had long ago passed from Abdullah Khan's knowledge; Turki he did not appear to have fully learned; and Hindustani he heard so rarely nowadays that conversation in it also presented difficulties. My knowledge of Pushtu was too scant to permit my judging how much he remembered of his mother-tongue. However, the message sent to him in advance had been duly grasped, and he had accordingly arranged for quarters during my stay at Keriya.

Soon after meeting this claimant of the "Sirkar's protection" I was welcomed in the Amban's name by a cavalcade of local Begs and their followers. The Begs were fat and jovial, and when they had convinced themselves that I could really talk their own tongue we kept up quite a lively chat while riding on towards the town. Etiquette evidently required that they should meet me in their quasi-Chinese official garb. The fur-lined little cape of 'Khitai' fashion was easily worn over their warm homely 'Chappans' or long coats. But the black silk cap with the red button of office is