

*blad* of July, 1897—I know how these got to Khotan, but “that is another story”—were relics of the imposture when Islam Akhun tried to make a living by representing himself among the ignorant ‘Taghliks’ south of Khotan and Keriya as an agent sent by Mr. Macartney to search out owners of slaves originally carried away by Hunza raiders from Indian territory. One of these newspaper sheets, nicely mounted on cloth, showed the portrait of a Swedish missionary in China, for which Islam Akhun pretended to have sat himself. The few Chinese characters printed below, giving the Chinese name of the reverend gentleman, were cunningly represented by him as containing his own name. Armed with these truly imposing documents, which he passed off as his official credentials, the clever rogue had managed to levy blackmail from innocent hillmen who feared to be accused of the retention of non-existent slaves. But after a short period of success he had been found out, and subsequently, on Mr. Macartney’s representation, had received due punishment at the Khotan Yamen. When about 1898 the sale of “old books” fell off, owing to the growing suspicion attaching to them among the European residents of Kashgar, Islam Akhun had taken to the calling of a ‘Hakim,’ or medicine man. The leaves of a French novel (left behind perhaps by MM. Dutreuil de Rhins and Grenard) and the fragments of some Persian texts, which had been found on his person and were also duly produced, were said to have figured as part of his latest equipment. But whether he used the leaves of the French novel merely to read out imaginary charms from, or administered pieces of them for internal consumption, was, I regret, not ascertained at the time.

The examination of this versatile individual proved a protracted affair, and through two long days I felt as if breathing the atmosphere of an Indian judicial court. When first arraigned in my improvised “Cutchery,” Islam Akhun readily and with contrite mien confessed his guilt in the above “personation case,” and also to having in 1898 obtained money from Badruddin, the Afghan Aksakal, by a forged note purporting to be in Captain Deasy’s