

Khotan in Buddhist legend, had wished to let me once more see, as a parting favour, every type of scenery I had beheld in the land over which he presided.

By daybreak of the 1st of May I set out for my long journey westwards. Cheered as I was by the thought of the road that now lay clear before me to Europe, I felt the sadness of saying farewell, probably for ever, to a fascinating field of work and to the last of my faithful local helpmates. At Zawa itself I had to take leave of Turdi, my honest old guide, whose experience and local sense never failed me in the desert. I liberally rewarded his services with more "treasure," *i.e.*, cash, than he had ever brought back from his wanderings in the Taklamakan. He had also the expectation of seeing himself, through Pan-Darin's favour, installed as 'Mirab' or steward of irrigation for his native village near Yurung-kash. It was a snug though modest post to which our 'Aksakal of the Taklamakan' fondly aspired, since he thought he was getting too old for the desert, and in view of his proved honesty I had been able to recommend him with a good conscience. Yet with this comforting prospect before him, I could see how genuine the tears were that at our parting trickled over the weather-beaten face of the old treasure-seeker.

It was easier to leave behind Niaz Akhun, my Chinese interpreter. He had fallen into a matrimonial entanglement with a captivating Khotan damsel of easy virtue, and had decided to remain, against the emphatic warnings of the old Amban, who plainly told him that, as a confirmed gambler and without a chance of employment, he would soon be starving. He had taken the earliest opportunity to divest himself of all further responsibilities for his wife and children at Kashgar by divorcing her "through letter post" as it were, the necessary document from a Khotan Mullah costing only a few Tangas. With such remarkable ease of divorce throughout the country, as illustrated by this typical case, the organisation of Turkestan family life has always appeared to me rather puzzling.

Islam Beg and Badruddin Khan, who had reason to be satisfied with the rewards their efficient services had earned them, would not