

cottage above the Dal lake near Srinagar from morning till dusk. Had it not been for my solitary walks in the evening, I should scarcely have had time to observe how the glowing tints of the Kashmir autumn gave way to the dull mists and muddy snows of the valley's cheerless winter. It was a period of great strain and anxious labour; for a variety of practical considerations which cannot be detailed here, made it a matter of the utmost concern that I should be free to start for Turkestan as early in the spring as the high passes northward were at all practicable. But in the end the unbroken exertion of those trying six months bore fruit. Towards the close of March, when the sun had at last begun fitfully to smile again upon the Alpine land, which Hindu mythology represents as Himalaya's favourite daughter, my *Ancient Khotan* was practically completed. Thanks to the help of self-sacrificing friends far away, the greater portion of its two stout quarto volumes had safely passed through the University Press in distant Oxford.

Nor had the many preparations for the long and difficult travels before me been neglected. Correspondence had settled all details about the two native assistants whose services were to be placed at my disposal by the Survey of India and the Military Department. What stores, scientific instruments, and other equipment were needed from London, Calcutta, and elsewhere had been ordered in good time. In Srinagar itself willing hands of faithful old Kashmiri retainers had busied themselves over the furs, felt boots, and other articles of personal outfit which were to protect us against the climatic rigours of Central-Asian mountains and deserts. Their care, too, had effected what repairs were needed in my little Kabul tent, supplied by the Cawnpore Elgin Mills in 1900 for my first journey, and ever since my only true home, to make it thoroughly fit for another three years' campaigning.

For my entry into Chinese Turkestan I was eager to use a new route, singularly interesting for the student of early geography and ethnography, but practically closed by political difficulties to the European traveller. It was to take me from the Indian administrative border