

preparing for his first travels. It was a joy to see the lively little boy running about in the garden, climbing its mud-built parapets whenever the protecting eyes of mother or nurse were turned, and otherwise enjoying the glorious freedom of a residence so spacious and a season so genial.

How memories revived of my own early childhood, of days quite as sunny spent in gardens which then to youthful eyes seemed as vast as a kingdom! But Master Eric, the happy possessor of this Kashgar kingdom, had for a few months enjoyed the additional good fortune of a baby sister to admire and to play with—the first British Baby which had made bold to see the light in innermost Asia. Ever smiling and cheerful, the little ruddy-cheeked maid was a constant visitor to the garden, imbibing robust health and good spirits with its fresh air.

I was anxious to start my desert campaign from Khotan as early as the abating heat of the plains would permit; and what with all the work planned elsewhere during the few intervening summer months, I could not spare more than a fortnight for Kashgar. So the 'rush' of the preparations to be got through there was necessarily great. Mr. Macartney's unfailing help and forethought did much to lighten their worries, and the gratifying way in which one of my old myrmidons after another turned up to resume his place in the rapidly forming caravan, to some extent simplified arrangements. Yet in spite of all the advantages which my hosts' inexhaustible kindness and local influence assured, the days slipped past far too rapidly before I was ready to move southwards. Within a week of my arrival, however, I managed to secure a set of eight camels, which looked big and well seasoned, from a trading convoy setting out to Almati across the T'ien-shan northward. The price I had reluctantly to pay for them, 88 Taels per animal, or about rupees 220 at the rate of exchange then prevailing, seemed high. But it was only an illustration of the great rise in the cost of most commodities which has taken place since 1900 through the rapid economic development of the whole region. This rise necessarily made itself particularly felt at Kashgar,