

the central emporium for the flourishing trade with Russian Turkestan and southernmost Siberia. Luckily the dozen ponies needed for followers and light baggage could still be picked up at reasonable prices, varying from rupees 35 to 50, on successive visits to the weekly horse market.

Strangely enough, the increased cost of living had in no way affected the leisurely or, to put it plainly, lazy and idling habits of the Kashgar artisans. Picnics in suburban gardens still appeared to them, as to the rest of the inhabitants just above the verge of downright indigence, the only legitimate occupation for the summer. The fruit season had set in about a week before my arrival, with delicious apricots in plenty, mulberries of several sorts, and the rarer cherries, all to be indulged in almost for nothing. Hence it proved a somewhat exasperating task to catch the leather-worker, carpenter, blacksmith, and tailor needed for the outfit of my caravan. One after the other of these worthies brought from the Bazar by Mr. Macartney's Chaprassis with kind words or a little gentle pressure, after a few hours' playing at work disappeared on the flimsiest pretence or escaped without even offering one. Not until many failures could sufficiently tame specimens be discovered, who by sheer apathy or force of habit condescended to turn up regularly for their easy tasks and generous wages when market-days and other local distractions did not prescribe a legitimate *dies festa*. More than ever I learned to appreciate the happy conditions of life in cases where pressure of population has not yet begun seriously to make itself felt, and to admire also the infinite patience and perseverance which it must have cost my kind hosts to create a home so well appointed and furnished as Chini-bagh.

So in genial ease the artisans progressed slowly with the numerous repairs which the baggage required, with the new saddlery ordered, and with that accumulation of little tasks which in more business-like regions might be disposed of in a day or two, but in Turkestan are apt to spread themselves out over weeks in oppressive fashion; and all the while I was hard at work in my shady garden quarters on proofs of *Ancient Khotan*. The accumulation of these