

well-printed quarto sheets from the Oxford University Press had been a heavy burden on my conscience ever since the 'rush' of my journey from the Peshawar border had made it a physical impossibility for me to 'eat up' the weekly consignments of proofs with which that distinguished *officina* supplied me regularly whenever a Dak could reach us. The Russian post *via* Farghana, now still further accelerated by the opening of the Tashkend-Orenburg Railway, furnished a quick means of transit for the return of the corrected sheets, and twice every week I sent packet after packet to the letter-box of the Russian Consulate to catch the despatches.

But apart from the chance of clearing off a literary obligation, what a luxury it seemed at Kashgar to be within nineteen or twenty days' post of dear friends in the Far West! All through the two years of travel which followed, my mail bags sent over steadily growing distances from the East carried brief communications for transit by the Russian post, while the bulk of my letters, especially those of any importance, were for safety's sake directed by the far longer but 'all-British' route *via* Hunza and India.

At the Russian Consulate I met from the first with the friendliest reception. The Anglo-Russian agreement seemed at Kashgar happily anticipated, at any rate in personal relations. M. Kolokoloff, who had succeeded Consul-General M. Petrovsky about two years before, proved an officer exceptionally well acquainted with things Chinese and full of interesting information about the Far East. He had been Russian Consul at Mukden during the first period of the Japanese War, and the description of his experiences brought the scenes of those historical events strangely near. Nor could I fail to be impressed with admiration for the patient heroism of Madame Kolokoloff, who had been forced to leave Mukden for St. Petersburg with her youngest child only nine days old immediately after the outbreak of hostilities. That weary journey of close on two months must have been an experience to try strength, physical and mental, more perhaps than many a long journey of exploration.

Close to the Consulate the local agency of the Russo-