

CHAPTER XI

TO YARKAND AND KARGHALIK

EARLY in the afternoon of the same day, June 23rd, I took leave of my kind hosts and the friendly shelter of Chini-bagh to start for Yarkand, my first *étape* on the long journey south-eastwards. It was not without a feeling of regret that I cast a farewell look over the sun-lit terraces of the garden and the stately poplar avenues which give shade to its walks. I could not say this time whether my return journey would bring me again to Kashgar, and anyhow an interval of two years seemed a long time even in Central-Asian conditions of life and travel. The Macartneys by their hospitality and unceasing care had made my stay a time of real rest in spite of all hurried labours. On saying good-bye to them I felt as if I were parting with the last living link, too, which bound me to dear friends left behind years before in distant Europe.

The journey which brought me in five days to Yarkand lay by the main road I had followed in parts during 1900-1901, and again on my ride from Ighiz-yar. But there was a marked change in the conditions of travel. After the trying heat of that afternoon and evening spent on the first march between Kashgar and Yapchan I realized that my travelling would have to be done mainly at night, both for the men's sake and for that of the animals. To take shelter during the day in a small tent such as mine was out of the question. So I had to abandon the thought of camping in the gardens which had offered peaceful retreats on former journeys, and instead to look out for a more solid roof to rest under during the heat of the day.

There were the official Chinese rest-houses or 'Kung-