

topics did not occupy us entirely during the lavish and yet *recherché* feast to which the kindly old administrator treated my jovial Ssü-yeh and myself. Pên Ta-jên told me a good deal about his favourite son, who had been for two years a student in Japan and was now holding a good administrative post near Shanghai. He had never seen him since he was a small child. But the telegraph from Kashgar kept father and son in touch, in spite of the enormous distance, which letters by official Chinese post still took half a year or more to cover.

The Amban, in spite of his own strictly traditional learning, was full of admiration for Japanese success, but seemed inclined to attribute it mainly to the solid foundation which Confucian philosophy as studied in Nippon had prepared for it! Buddhism, I was sorry to gather, seemed to him too closely associated with superstitions of all sorts to deserve serious study, though out of regard for my revered patron-saint he politely refrained from putting this quite plainly. But the most pleasing item of converse was the news that P'an Ta-jên, my old friend and supporter in Khotan, had just been appointed from Urumchi to the office of Tao-t'ai at Ak-su. As the Lop-nor region was included among the districts attached to his new charge, his friendly influence was likely to assist my fresh labours even from afar. So his appointment at this opportune juncture seemed, indeed, an auspicious omen.

Visits to Mr. Raquette, the Swedish missionary, and his wife, old acquaintances in Kashgar now transferred to Yarkand, gave me occasion for evening rides through the Bazars and the winding lanes of the 'Old Town.' They looked far more picturesque and pleasing than those of Kashgar, a result mainly due to the plentiful presence of fine shady trees and of tanks which, to the eyes at least, were refreshing. But I wondered whether their water, stagnating probably for a great part of the year, was not largely responsible for that prevalence of goitre which old Marco Polo had noticed among 'the inhabitants of Yarcán.'

Hidden away at the end of a narrow lane in a quiet part of the city, the Raquettes' house was quite a surprise by