

had drifted to Karghalik from Bokhara some twenty years before. He was a queer-looking old man with the face of a harpy, more than a match for the cleverest of Turki debtors who may fall into his clutches. He had brought a good number of old Bactrian, Arsacidian, and other Greek coins with him from Bokhara,—or had since been supplied with them by friends left behind there. Most of the silver pieces proved to be forgeries, and this, together with the big prices asked, prevented a business transaction.

The Amban of Karghalik had not yet returned from a visit to Kashgar, whither enquiries into certain alleged fiscal defalcations of his predecessor had called him. This saved me a halt and those formal visits which seemed to have grown more exacting since the style of my new Chinese passport from the Wai-wu-pu had promoted me to the rank of a Ta-jên or 'Excellency.' The modest little suburban house where I took up my quarters, conveniently near the Bazar and the Ya-mên, gave pleasant shelter for a busy day. My residence consisted mainly of a kind of loggia, with a carved wood front giving on a small but picturesque garden. I was delighted to find in it real European flowers—nasturtiums, a kind of phlox, and some other old acquaintances which to me, alas, remain anonymous. Otherwise the garden was of the typical Indian style, a miniature jungle crossed by rectangular paths.

My Chinese secretary's visit to the Ya-mên soon secured all arrangements needed for the stay I had planned at Kôk-yar. There, at an elevation of about 6400 feet, I hoped to find a cool and peaceful spot to dispose of the tasks still burdening me in connection with *Ancient Khotan*. The little oasis where the summer route from the Kara-koram Pass debouches from the mountains, with its local resources, seemed just suited for this purpose, and in the hills close by my camels and ponies could get good grazing, and prepare for the hard work before them.