

faces bore an expression of happy satiation which deserved to be caught by the brush of an old Dutch painter.

The seemingly endless row of booths, probably quite half a mile long, in the Bazar street (Fig. 48), though empty this day, was the best proof of the agricultural wealth and the busy production of this neighbourhood. Not less was the industrial importance of Khotan brought home to me by the constant succession of caravans, made up mostly of droves of sturdy donkeys, carrying silk, cotton fabrics, felts and other manufactured goods westwards. I thought of the day, happily still far off, when Khotan will have its railway, and when all this busy life of the road will be transferred to stations and trains.

As I approached Kara-kash, my escort was joined by the local Beg, a person of consequence, looking grand in his blue silk coat and official Chinese cap with crystal button and horse-tail. As etiquette makes all such dignitaries insist on riding in front of one, in due order of rank, there was plenty of dust to be swallowed in return for such exalted attention. But, I confess, that day I gladly submitted to all this display, from a feeling that after all it was my return to ground to which by hard work I had established a scholarly claim. It may be weakness and vanity, but it pleased me to see how well I was still remembered throughout the oasis. The Amban had passed the town in the morning, having been obliged to proceed to a village of the Zawa canton for urgent investigation of a murder case. Though he was expected to return for the night, nothing would do for the accommodation of the 'Ulugh Mihman,' my humble self, but the recently constructed official residence of the Amban, a kind of 'Sessions House,' to use the Anglo-Indian term. So to it I had to proceed, though, if a choice had been possible without causing much trouble, I should have greatly preferred to take up my quarters again in the quiet country house of my old host of 1901, Karim Akhun Beg.

My misgivings were justified; for when I entered the large Ya-mên-like building at the meeting of three fine poplar-lined roads just outside the west gate of Kara-kash, I found that the building operations which were needed to