

2000 Taels, or roughly rupees 5000, quite a big sum for these regions.

My short stay at Kara-kash was brightened by the arrival late in the evening of Islam Beg, my old Darogha of the Karanghu-tagh and Dandan-oilik expeditions, whose excellent services P'an Ta-jên had at my recommendation rewarded by the Beg-ship of the 'Ming' or canton of Kayash in the Kara-kash district (Fig. 71). The news of my arrival was quick to reach him, and now he hurried to greet me and assure me of his gratitude. That in spite of Chinese administrative methods in the 'New Dominion,' which for reasons of fiscal policy and—private advantage—favour frequent changes in the native *personnel*, he had retained his charge without a break, was more than he or I could reasonably have hoped for when we parted.

It was evidently efficient work and popular esteem to which he owed this special consideration on the part of successive Ambans, of whom Khotan had seen not less than four in the five years since P'an Ta-jên. But Islam Beg politely insisted in attributing his good luck to my protection, or rather to the impression my advocacy had left behind at the Ya-mên. It was anyhow gratifying that he now claimed the privilege of sharing my campaign in the mountains. This task, for which his previous experience no doubt fitted him, was sure to imply also renewed hardships. However, in spite of a fat post and a comfortable income from his inherited land, Islam Beg had kept fit in body and full of quiet energy. So I gladly accepted his offer, provided the Amban would agree to this 'deputation.'

A march of some sixteen miles on August 5th brought me back once more to the Khotan capital. It was a day of trying heat, but full of most cheering impressions. Chance had so arranged it that it should be a Sunday, the weekly market-day of Kara-kash town, and that the road leading to this thriving local centre from Khotan should be enlivened by a continuous stream of mounted traders and country folk bringing merchandise and produce. So again a great portion of the curiously mixed community of petty traders—Bajauris, Afghans, Andijanais, men descended