

weeks on Akhun Beg's grazing-grounds in the mountains above Hasha. The glowing description he gave me of his flocks of sheep, of his herds of yaks, ponies, etc., was a proof that in spite of increased age my old host still kept a keen eye on the development of his rural wealth.

Ch'ê Ta-jên, the Amban of Khotan, returned from his tour of criminal investigation late on the day of my arrival. The fatigue which must have attended his rapid journeying did not keep him from a formal visit on the following morning. I had, of course, intended to pay the first call myself. But my genial Chinese secretary, whom I had entrusted with the needful announcement as well as with my official presents—a binocular and a piece of fine yellow Liberty brocade which always pleases Chinese taste—had not thought time of special importance in this case, and was still preparing himself by a prolonged visit to the barber when the Amban arrived in full state.

I was delighted to find him a very amiable and lively official, showing by his ways and conversation unmistakable energy and intelligence. His chief interpreter had been in office under P'an Ta-jên, and being thus well acquainted with my former work and travels in this region, was able to explain quickly and clearly what I stated about the objects of my renewed visit. The plates of my *Ancient Khotan* were of great help in demonstrating the results of my former labours; and though the Amban modestly refused to put himself in the same category with so learned a man as P'an Ta-jên, it was easy to see from his questions that his historical sense was equally keen.

But what pleased me even more was Ch'ê Ta-jên's evident interest in matters geographical. I badly needed his help for the renewal of my explorations in the Kun-lun range south of Khotan. Our surveys of 1900 had left interesting problems unsolved as to the uppermost course of the Yurung-kash River far away to the east and of the glacier sources of its main feeders from the south. To force our way up those difficult gorges, which form the only approach to the true head-waters of the great river, was a task I had long kept before my eyes. Without strict orders from the Amban the passive resistance of the wily