

Domoko and Gulakhma, to note ocular proofs of expanding cultivation and increasing prosperity. Since my visit of 1906 a large Bazar had sprung up at Domoko, entirely through local enterprise, and the belt of scrubby desert with tamarisk cones separating the two village tracts was being rapidly reduced by newly levelled fields ready for irrigation. And yet there were complaints of the summer floods having been generally below the mark during the last ten years. I have little doubt that increased pressure of population and other economic factors play an important part in these changes affecting what otherwise would be ideal ground for watching 'pulsatory desiccation' at work.

The remainder of March was spent in supplementary archaeological labours at a number of old sites, like Karayantak (Fig. 295), Ulugh-Mazar, and others along the desert which fringes the interesting area shown in the inset map of 'Oases of Chira, Gulakhma, Domoko,' and thence westwards to Khotan. The photograph reproduced in Fig. 296 shows my helpmates and myself, as united at the end of this winter campaign in the desert. My short halt at Khotan during the first days of April was made most pleasant by the welcome my old friends gave me, and by the satisfaction I felt at seeing all my antiques sent from Kuchar now safely stored in Akhun Beg's house.

But, perhaps, the greatest pleasure of all was that my dear old host was there to receive me in person (Fig. 52), safely home from that distant pilgrimage to Mecca for which he had so pluckily started a year and a half before. The portly old gentleman looked more cheerful than ever after all he had gone through during long days by rail across Russia and on the tossing seas. What a much-travelled man Akhun Beg had become in this short span of time, with his quaintly told experiences ranging from Samarkand to Stambul and Mecca the Holy, and from the Red Sea to Bombay, Kashmir, and the Kara-koram passes! And yet, as I camped in his garden, flushed with the short-lived glory of Turkestan spring-time, I could appreciate how proud and glad he was to be back again at his bright home in this thriving oasis. The plum and apricot trees, just in