

former. I longed to see the Macartneys again after nearly two years' absence, and to tell my old friend in person of the deep gratitude I felt for all the unceasing help and support he had given me from afar. But I knew that he and Mrs. Macartney were soon to start for an amply earned furlough to England, and could realize what preparations and cares such a journey with small children implied.

I, too, could ill spare the time which the *détour via* Kashgar would have cost. So I took the direct route to Yarkand. The hundred and thirty odd miles were covered in five rapid marches, not without some physical trouble; for my plane-table work obliged me to travel in the full heat of the day. There was profit to reap here too from exact survey work; for it taught me a good deal of the physical conditions which affect irrigation along the Yarkand River, and which account for curious fluctuations in the cultivated area of these straggling oases. The impression I gained was that a stream of gold could be caught here, as in some other parts of the Tarim Basin, if only there were a régime permitting of systematic irrigation schemes after Punjab or Egyptian models.

At Yarkand, where I had the great pleasure of again seeing Mr. and Mrs. Raquette of the Swedish Medical Mission, I was obliged to halt for a few days, mainly in order to dispose of my brave camels from Keriya. It seemed hard to part with these sturdy companions which had served me so well during nearly two years' desert travel. But they could not be used for the journey across the mountains to India, and Yarkand, where the currents of trade from the north and south meet, seemed the right place to get a good price for them. Since our Taklamakan crossing of the winter, the fame of my beasts had spread far along the caravan routes, and, of course, nothing was lost in the telling of the terrible deserts they had faced and their long weeks of toil without food or water.

So when my intention of selling was made known there were traders on the look-out to secure them. The animals were in excellent condition, though the spring clipping to which Hassan Akhun had subjected them before leaving Ak-su had left them rather naked and gaunt and without