

other small antiques brought to light since 1906. Besides I could take typical Khotan 'heads' (Fig. 310). Here on historic soil, where cultivation has effaced all traces of past greatness, I said good-bye to the charms of rural Khotan with its homesteads nestling in orchards and its quaint mosques shaded by huge old trees (Fig. 312).

On August 1st I was at last able to despatch my heavy convoy of antiques, making up over fifty camel-loads, to Sanju. There, under the care of Tila Bai and one of Badruddin Khan's trusted caravan men, it was to wait until the subsiding of the summer flood in the river would allow it to proceed in safety to Suget on the upper Karakash, where I hoped to rejoin it towards the close of September for the crossing of the Kara-koram.

After two more days spent in busy work, the time came for myself to set out for the foot of the mountains south-eastward. Chiang-ssü-yeh, whose labours for me were now ended, and also Badruddin Khan insisted upon accompanying me for the first march. Other Khotan friends saw me off by the bank of the Yurung-kash, which now rolled its huge summer flood in numerous beds, the two widest passable only in boats. The crossing with baggage was not without its risks, in spite of the large number and skill of the 'Suchis' or water-men detailed to guide men and animals. Dear old Akhun Beg, who bade me a touching farewell, remained behind to pray for our safe passage, and I still saw his venerable figure standing upright by the river bank when the whirling ferry-boat had carried me across the main bed. It took long hours before our three boat-loads of animals and baggage had been safely brought to the right bank (Fig. 313).

Then through the smiling fertile lands of the cantons of Yurung-kash and Sampula we rode to Kotaz Langar, where the night was passed by the edge of the bare gravel Sai. Next morning the baggage and the train of unladen animals intended for the mountains were sent ahead, while I remained behind to struggle with Badruddin Khan's last accounts and bid farewell to my devoted secretary and helpmate. It was a sad parting, and poor Chiang, at other times ever bright and cheerful, felt its pang quite as