

On my arrival at Kashgar early in October, Captain G. Sherriff, the British Consul-General, who throughout offered most valuable help, found the local Tao-tai unprepared for such arrangements. Repeated telegraphic application to the distant provincial headquarters brought after a fortnight an intimation from the 'Chairman' or governor that I should proceed to Urumchi personally to discuss arrangements with him. This would have meant a caravan journey of at least six weeks, taking me far away from the desert areas where the winter's explorations were planned, and practically implying the loss of a whole working season.

Three more weeks passed before the chairman's assent was secured to my proceeding to Urumchi by a route which skirts the southern edge of the Taklamakan and which would allow me on the way to visit certain ancient sites abandoned to the desert sands. By the middle of November I was at last enabled to leave Kashgar for Khotan. Special reference by the Consul-General elicited definite official assurance that on my way I was to be allowed 'to work', i.e. to examine ancient remains and to carry out needful surveys. A subordinate Chinese official was to accompany and assist me, obviously for the purpose of watching and reporting my proceedings.

By the time I had reached the oasis of Domoko, in the vicinity of which I had reason to look for ruins of Buddhist times hidden among the dunes, serious obstruction began to manifest itself. The magistrate of the Keriya district declared that he had received instructions prohibiting any 'digging' or making of plans at ruins. Being an official of known anti-foreign disposition he did his best to prevent me from obtaining needful local guidance to ruins or labour to clear them of the encumbering drift sand. An old and faithful Turki follower of my former journeys was thrown into prison merely for having come to see me as I passed his village. It all strangely contrasted with the ready help and genuine interest by which on my former expeditions scholarly Mandarins had invariably facilitated my researches, and without which they would have been impossible for the most part.

When I resumed my way eastwards from Keriya, where an attack of bronchitis, brought on by exposure, had laid me up for a fortnight, the difficulties about labour, transport, &c., continued. Nevertheless, on revisiting the ancient site in the desert beyond Niya, a sand-buried modest Pompeii abandoned in the third century A.D., it was possible to supplement former investigations by useful surveys and finds. They were achieved under very trying physical conditions largely through the devoted efforts of my two Indian assistants.

By the middle of February we had made our way across a succession of forbidding high ridges of sand and past another old site to the isolated oasis of Charchan. There news overtook me that the Nanking Government had cancelled my passport and insisted on my returning to India. The official communication of the Chinese Foreign Ministry had reproduced a series of unjustified allegations which the body known as the 'National Commission for the preservation of Chinese antiquities', under the influence of the above-mentioned agitation, had brought forward about my former explorations. They were coupled with equally unfounded statements about my present aims. I could not meet these charges at the time from such a distance, but learned months later with all the more satisfaction that the President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, a friend familiar with all my work, in a letter published in *The Times* of January 3rd had duly exposed the fantastic character of those statements.