

SECTION III.—FROM KHOTAN TO LONDON

Of the journey which, within two months of my start from Khotan, brought me back to Kāshgar and thence through Russian Turkeṣtān to England, the briefest account will suffice here. Six rapid marches, diversified by Burāns and the rare experience of gathering rain-clouds, carried me to Yarkand, where my caravan had safely preceded me. It was fortunate that, owing to the short stay I was obliged to make at Yarkand for the settlement of my Yarkandī followers' accounts and debts, my collections escaped serious risk of damage from an abnormal burst of rain such as this region had not seen for long years. The downpour of two days and two nights turned all roads into quagmires and caused the mud-built walls of many houses in town and villages to collapse.

Return to
Kāshgar.

A ride of three days, in advance of my caravan, sufficed to bring me by May 12 to Kāshgar, where, under Mr. Macartney's hospitable roof, the warmest welcome greeted me. It was a source of keen satisfaction to me to show that kind friend, who had from afar followed my explorations with constant interest, what ample results had attended my work, and how much I owed to that local help which his influence and care had mainly assured to me. The kind hospitality I enjoyed at his house made my stay at Kāshgar a period of much needed physical rest, in spite of the multifarious preparations which kept me constantly at work during the next fortnight.

The Government of India in the Foreign Department had obtained for me permission from the authorities in St. Petersburg to travel through Russian Turkeṣtān and to use the Trans-Caspian Railway for my return to Europe. I had also been authorized to take my collections for temporary deposit to England, where alone convenient arrangements could be made for their critical examination. It was hence necessary at Kāshgar to repack all my antiquarian finds with special regard for safe transit on this long journey, while all surveying instruments and other equipment, together with the records of our surveys, were to be sent back to India in charge of the Sub-Surveyor. In addition to the fresh transport arrangements thus necessitated by our different routes, I was kept busy also with the 'demobilization' of my old caravan. Among the items of business connected with the latter, the satisfactory disposal of camels and ponies which had served us so well during the journeys of the previous eight months was an important concern. That after all the hard marching and camping in the desert I was able to sell them with but very small loss to Government from the original prices may serve as a proof of the care we had taken of our animals.

'Demobilization' of
caravan.

The arrangements for my onward journey were greatly facilitated by the kind help of M. Petrovsky, late Imperial Consul-General of Russia at Kāshgar, whose acquaintance I was fortunate enough to make on this occasion. During a long official career in Turkeṣtān M. Petrovsky had devoted a great deal of scholarly zeal to the study of the history and antiquities of the country. He now did all in his power to ensure the safe transit of my archaeological finds to England and to procure for me the friendly assistance of the authorities in Russian Turkeṣtān. For the valuable help thus accorded I wish to record here my grateful acknowledgements.

Help of
Russian
Consul-
General.

It was a source of genuine satisfaction to me that I had repeated occasions to meet also Huang-kuang-ta, the kindly old Tao-tai of Kāshgar, and to assure him of my gratitude for the most effective co-operation which I had received from the Chinese officials wherever my explorations took me within the districts subordinate to his control. The amiable old administrator did not deny the genuine interest and good-will with which he had followed my work. But he

Assistance
of Chinese
officials.