

sat in their booths selling fruit, sweetmeats, tobacco, cloths and junk of all sorts. One glimpsed a Chinese temple; and here and there a sunbeam stole through the canopies and formed a pleasant patch of light and colour on some Chinese shop-sign of cloth. A medley of voices and cries and noises and tinkling bells filled the tunnel, whose sun-sheltered atmosphere provided a sort of twilight. Our escort, a third of whom were remaining behind in Turfan, rode half drunk before my cart to clear a passage; and slowly and creakingly we made our tortuous way through the crowd till we finally reached the place where the asses' water-tubs were filled and where snow-white geese were gabbling near a canal, while doves with little pipes bound to their tail-feathers produced a whistling sound when they flew. On our left we passed a *mazar* or holy grave, surrounded by many other graves.

INTO THE T' IEN-SHAN AGAIN

After an hour and a half we saw the last groves of trees and fields disappear behind us and were once more in desert country. Between sterile hills and with red mountains on our right we swung round to the north-west up through a valley where a little village was situated near a stream. The route left the valley and traversed the hills to the left. They consisted of sandstone, and had been filed and eroded by winds and storms into bizarre shapes that by the light of the setting sun resembled red ruins. Late that evening we landed up at the village K'ang-k'ang, called in Turki Qindiq.

Here one of our soldiers reported that the chief of the escort had disappeared, and presumably lay dead by the wayside. I replied that there was probably no cause for worry and that he would very likely turn up in due course. And sure enough, later that night he made his appearance in K'ang-k'ang. He had tumbled off his horse, which had promptly bolted; and when the man had slouched off to look for his mount he had forgotten his rifle and been beaten up by his own men. This had sobered him up.

The march on February 22nd took us parallel with the mountains. The countryside was absolutely sterile. Beyond the village Togra-su the sun sank below the horizon, and presently it was quite dark. Armed with an electric torch, NORIN went on ahead on foot and showed the way, that was here rather confusing. When late that night we arrived in the village Qovurga, or as the Chinese call it, San-ko-ch'üan-tze or »The Three Springs«, HUMMEL and BERGMAN, who had ridden on ahead, had already arranged for our somewhat bare accommodation and prepared an excellent dinner of soup and chicken.

On the way to Kugolo or Ho-k'ou, that led through a ruddy and undulating country of limestone and sandstone forming flat spurs and valleys, we passed the boundary between the districts of Turfan and Urumchi, marked by a boundary-stone.