

the Ilek branch and the main stream of the Konche River. There, once more, to my surprise, we found pottery scattered about. The ancient villages must have been very widely distributed. The following day, we avoided more ponds, which, like all the rest, were four or five feet lower than the shore-line marking what was said to have been their level in 1900. Columns of smoke had been visible in the distance ever since we first came in sight of vegetation, but the distance seemed interminable. Finally, however, toward noon of the second day, we reached a fire not far from the Konche River. A timid shepherd in cap, coat, trousers, and boots of ragged, undressed sheep-skin was engaged in burning off the reeds so that his flocks might feed on the tender young shoots in the spring. He left his chubby, five-year-old son to carry on the work, while he cheerfully led us to the Tikkenlik road. When we parted, he laughed aloud with pleasure at the unexpected good luck which gave him a coin to put in his mouth, and some bread to stow away in the top of his big cap.

Tikkenlik proved to be a scattered little village. Its five hundred inhabitants, Lopliks and Turfanliks, live partly in mud houses and partly in houses of reeds. It is notable as being the only permanent village, as distinguished from tiny fishing and shepherd hamlets, on the lower four hundred miles of the Tarim River, or the lower two hundred and fifty of the Konche; and it is the only place where there is any serious attempt at agriculture. It is essentially the modern representative of Lulan. The two may fairly be regarded as measuring the success of their respective ages in utilizing the dwindling lower portion of the stream whose headwaters