

RECORDS OF THE JOURNEY

About 2/3 of a mile below Hsia Pai-yang-ho the road grew very rough and ran for fully 8 minutes along the smooth rock of a narrow mountain cornice. Here it turned away from the river and took us zigzagging up the steep bank. For about 7 miles the road led in a SE direction, the last bit along a slight valley with traces of water. The ground is firm gravel. At a distance of a mile or two on the left there is a considerable mountain; on the right a smaller one that ran parallel to the road with slight interruptions. The valley we followed turned north and brought us after a couple of miles to the Shaftalluk sarai, situated in a clump of trees. Meat and fodder can be bought in small quantities. There is water, fuel and a little grass pasturage. Just above the large sarai some springs feed a murmuring little river or stream that winds down the valley and is called Hun liu khöza. The ledges and the bottom of the valley are terracotta colour. Some dry water-beds combined during our journey with the one we had followed, but no water was visible anywhere.

*September 23rd.
Kichik.*

From the sarai the road took us up the right-hand slope of the valley and over a black gravel plain with a constant drop southward. On the left our valley seemed to run SSE. On the opposite side there was a barren plateau of rolling land with a drop southward, forming a continuation of the mountains that we had had on our left. On the right the mountains had disappeared. As far as we could see the same falling black gravel plain extended, intersected here and there by a valley in the NNW—SSE. Before us the Turfan valley was spread out. Water sparkled indistinctly far to the SE. Immediately in front of us a succession of small, isolated mountains and far on the horizon the Choltagh chain of mountains. Neither oases nor Turfan could be seen in the dust-laden air. On a clear day it should be possible to survey a large part of the valley as if from a balloon. The Kichik sarai, where we camped, lies on the same river as Shaftalluk, about 4 miles lower. There is a clump of trees, some grass and water and a passable sarai. It is little used, caravans usually halting at Shaftalluk.

The road from (Shang) Pai-yang-ho to the mountain cornice is stony, but passable even for wheeled vehicles. There is fuel and water everywhere and in some places grass. After leaving the river the road crosses firm ground consisting of gravel and is quite suitable for wheeled traffic. There are no supplies except at the sarais.

There is not much to be said about the road from the Kichik sarai. It leads SE over a hot, monotonous and apparently unending plain of gravel and stone. A mile below Kichik we passed quite an insignificant sarai of the same name. No fuel or grass; a small quantity of water from a little ariq is all the place can offer. About the same distance further on we came to the ruins of another sarai. Immediately after the murmuring water of the Hun liu khöza accompanied the road on the right. When the road finally separated from it, we went on across the gravel plain, which has a perceptible drop southward. We rode across this ground for fully 10 miles in almost the same direction. On the way we crossed a broad, dry water-channel, the course of which was N—S. In other places, too, we noticed small furrows, as though cut by descending water. We were now quite close to the small chain of mountains that ran W—E near the middle of the valley. To the north of it there was a green strip that widens in the E and covers a considerable space. The air

*September 25th.
Turfan.*