

remarkable that such a depression should occur so far inland in the heart of a continent.

*July 18.*—Started at 5.10 p.m., passing out of the Chinese town by the west gate and through the Turk town, after which we turned off south, passing over a plain with a good deal of cotton planted on it. Wheat has now nearly all been reaped. The poppy crop is also over. At five miles we rounded the end of a low spur running down from the Tian-shan, and passed over a level valley covered with scrub, but uncultivated. A tremendous wind was blowing, making our progress very slow, so we halted at 11 p.m., at a solitary inn, sixty li from Turfan.

*July 19.*—Started at 3 a.m., still crossing the plain, gradually approaching a line of cultivation to our left. Halted at 8.30 a.m., at Toksun. This is a small town, or rather two small towns, both walled, each about a quarter of a mile square, and half a mile apart. There is a small garrison here, probably four or five hundred men. The shops are small. Here and at Turfan grapes and melons are very plentiful. The Turfan grapes are very good, and nearly equal to those grown in English hothouses. They are large, very fleshy, and full of flavour. One kind is elongated, and some of them are one and a half to one and three-quarter inch long.

Started again at 3.40 p.m., in a southerly direction. The cultivation lasted for a mile, and then gave place to scrub, which three miles further ceased, and we ascended the bare gravelly slope of a range to the south. The gravel was mixed with sand, and loose, so the going was very heavy, and we got along slowly. Here, as at all the difficult pieces along the road, skeletons of horses were numerous, and we also passed two human skeletons. At sixteen miles from Toksun, we entered the hills, perfectly bare, as usual, and four miles further halted at an inn on a small stream.

Weather to-day cooler ; very strong westerly wind.

*July 20.*—Started at 5.30 a.m., and had a very long hard