

Altogether the eastern end of Turkestan bore a depressing look. For every inhabited house we saw we would pass at least two in ruins. In passing through the villages scarcely an inhabitant would be met with, and few were seen working in the fields, and much land which had formerly been cultivated was now lying fallow. There seemed to be as many Chinese as Turkis, but the Chinese were mostly Moham-medans and in physique inferior to those of China proper. Little traffic was met with on the road as the summer is not considered a favourable season for travelling. But occasionally we passed a detachment of soldiers, or a waggon, or strings of donkeys, the principal pack animal of the country, carrying country produce to market. Grapes are largely grown in this part, dried to raisins, and taken to Hami.

We pushed on rapidly, travelling indifferently day or night, according to the length of the stage, merely halting at the end of each a sufficient length of time to rest the animals, and then starting again, sometimes at eleven o'clock at night, sometimes at four in the morning, and sometimes at two in the after-