

it was midnight before the first point on the Chinese side was reached, where fuel and a dry spot made it possible to lie down and rest.

Here, at the head of the Taghdum-bash Pamir, I found myself once more at the point where in 1900 I had first set foot on Chinese soil. Down this high valley where, according to the saying of the Sarikolis who occupy its lower end, winter lasts ten months and summer two, Hsüan-tsang, the great Chinese pilgrim, had travelled when about A.D. 642 he returned from his many years' travels in India. I had traced his footprints before to many sacred Buddhist sites, and was now setting out to follow them so much farther to the east.

So I felt particularly gratified when I was able on my way down definitely to locate the ruined rock fastness where a curious ancient legend related by the pilgrims supposed an imperial princess, on her way from China to Persia, to have been once placed for safety. The fortifications which I traced on the top of an almost completely isolated rock spur rising above a gloomy defile of the Taghdum-bash river and known as Kiz-kurghan, 'the Princess's Tower' (Fig. 18), must have been long in ruins already in Hsüan-tsang's time. But owing to the dryness of the climate the walls defending this ancient place of refuge were still clearly traceable. Yet their material was mere sun-dried bricks with regular layers of juniper twigs embedded between them. Far away to the east we shall meet with the same ancient Chinese method of construction in the border wall of the Han *Limes* built in the second century B.C.

At Tash-kurghan, the headquarters of Sarikol, I re-visited the site of the old capital of the territory. It is marked by