

stantial foundation than the existence of some Muhammadan tombs and of rude shepherd huts by the side of dry river-beds. My *soi-disant* guides were quite *bona fide* in their own way and genuinely sorry that my supposed magic arts, on which they had based their hope of discovering those ruins and their buried treasures, did not prove strong enough to overcome the evil spirits hiding the walled towns which their imagination, fostered by old folklore, had before let them see—invariably during a sand-storm!

On my third expedition Korla served in the first days of April 1915 as a convenient place of meeting for the several parties in which we had worked since Turfan. From there we set out again some days later for the long journey to Kashgar. Lal Singh's task was to keep close to the T'ien-shan and to survey as much of the main range as the early season and the available time would permit. Muhammad Yakub, the second surveyor, was sent south across the Konche and Inchike rivers to the Tarim with instructions to survey its main channel as it lay at the time to the vicinity of Yarkand. With him I let go most of our camels in order that they might benefit by the abundant grazing in the riverine jungles after all the privations they had gone through since the autumn of 1913. I myself, for the sake of antiquarian tasks, had to keep in the main to the long line of oases which fringes the southern foot of the T'ien-shan.

Through this line there still passes the main trade route of the Tarim basin, just as it has always done since ancient times. Well known as is this highroad, extending over some 600 miles from Korla to Kashgar, it yet allowed me to gather plenty of useful observations both on the present physical and economic conditions of the oases and on their