

bright yellow and brown looked singularly neat in this setting of gardens and orchards. Here and there a cemetery with tombs of sun-dried bricks and a crumbling mosque or Ziarat built of the same material added a picturesque touch to the rural landscape. The high-pitched songs of my pony-men as we moved at a rapid amble through the lanes always brought the children and women before the doors of their homesteads. The men were busy in the fields, and until we got to the Bazar of Tokuzak I saw scarcely any grown-up person that was not occupied in some way. We had so far suffered little from the dust, for the route we had followed was not the high-road from Tashmalik, but a more circuitous track connecting hamlet with hamlet. But at last we emerged on the road and found it as dusty as it was broad. High lumbering carts or 'Arabas' dragged along by little ponies and droves of donkeys kept up a continuous cloud. I was getting eager to reach the end of the journey and too readily gave credence to Sadak Akhun, who about 5 p.m. assured me that Kashgar was now within one 'Tash's' distance. I had not yet learned that, away from the main caravan roads where the Chinese administration has marked the distances of ten 'Li' (approximately two miles) by small mud-built towers popularly known as 'Tash' (stone), this measure in Turkestan conveys only the vaguest estimate of distance.

It was disappointing when after an hour's ride there was still no sign of the river-bed which I knew we should have to cross before approaching the town. At last at a turn of the road a broad nullah came in sight, with a shallow stream. But beyond it no trace of walls, Minars or other tokens of an Eastern city. The river was not the Kizil-su which flows past Kashgar, but only a branch of it known as Ak-su ("White Stream") or Telwichuk. Another three miles or so of endless rice fields seemed a long distance in the failing light and on the tired ponies. But at last they too came to an end, and we forded the truly red water of the Kizil-su ("Red Stream").