

Yarbagh Gate of the city and along the foot of its northern walls. Then the river had to be crossed by the bridge of Tarbugaz, with its picturesque little Minars at either end. It was no market day, yet the stream of mounted peasants, droves of loaded donkeys and ponies that passed through the adjoining Bazars, might elsewhere have suggested a great fair. Where the road, flanked by cemeteries, turns off to Hazrat Apak's shrine, the true Via Appia of Kashgar, I overtook the camels, and then rode on between suburban gardens and through shaded village lanes northwards to Beshkarim. This large collection of hamlets which lies on the caravan route towards the distant Naryn and which has since terribly suffered in the great earthquake of 1902, was reached about midday.

In the central village, known as Beshkarim Bazar, a grand reception awaited me. There was the Beg of the little district, a cheerful Kashgari dressed in orthodox Chinese fashion, ready to welcome me, and on the terrace of his 'Yamen,' under shady elms, a plentiful 'Dastarkhan' of fruit, tea, and sweetmeats. It was a pleasure to sit down in the airy verandah and to partake of the delicious fruit then abounding all over the country. For my companions and servants there was no lack of more substantial refreshments in the form of soups, large plates of mutton, and mountains of flat cakes. The broad market-place in front was filled with men and ponies, each village headman summoned for the occasion having evidently brought a little troop of mounted followers. To walk on foot is an exertion left in these parts only to the poorest.

At Beshkarim Bazar nearly an hour passed, there being no need to hurry on in the heat of the sun before the baggage turned up. Then we mounted and with a following swelled by the local Beg's people and the headmen under him, pursued our eastward way. For some eight miles the road wound through highly cultivated strips, along irrigation canals of varying size, all fringed with rows of poplars and willows.