

our ponies to graze awhile in the few lucerne fields. By 2 p.m. Kizil was reached, a large village on the main road that connects Kashgar with Yarkand. The sight of its green fields and gardens was truly delightful after the mournful desert behind us. My servants made straight for the Chinese rest-house and seemed surprised when I objected to putting up at that dusty caravanserai, with its courtyards full of carts, donkeys, ponies, and their attendants. Sadak Akhun gravely asserted that the 'Sahibs' coming from Kashgar "always" stopped there. But then I came from Hindustan, and had learned by long experience that the places where "everybody" camps are usually the least attractive. So I set out to search for a camping-ground, and after a while found what I had looked for. A charming little orchard surrounded by open fields gave room and shade for my tent, while the owner hospitably welcomed my followers in his house a short distance off. Grapes and excellent peaches were soon forthcoming, and I feasted on them in honour of my return from a first visit to the desert.

The following day, the 16th of September, was spent on a long march through an arid waste to Kok-robot, the western limit of the great oasis of Yarkand. For a distance of close on twenty-four miles there was neither a tree nor even a shrub to be seen, only the gravel-covered grey 'Dasht' far away to the dusty horizon. As we were now on a post route I found a square, mud-built tower marking each 'Potai,' the Chinese road measure equivalent to ten 'Li.' As the Potai seems to correspond closely to a distance of two English miles it is evident that the value of about one-fifth of a mile still holds good for the Li in Turkestan, as it does by computation, for the road distances recorded in India by Hiuen-Tsiang and other Chinese pilgrims.

I stopped awhile at midday at Ak-robot ("the White Station"), a solitary Sarai in the desolate waste. I found the little rest-house within the enclosure, evidently intended