

labourers along to this new site, as the distance was great and the men were exhausted by the hard work of the last three weeks. The fresh set of men needed could only be secured from Niya. It was hence a welcome surprise when on arrival at that evening's camping-place I was met by the Deputy of the Beg of Niya, who brought not only a fresh Kashgar mail sent on by the thoughtful Amban of Keriya, but also assurance that all arrangements had been made for the timely dispatch of the fresh contingent. The next day's march to Imam Jafar Sadik was easy, and it rejoiced me to hear once more the rustling of the leaves in the luxuriant jungle that marks the end of the Niya stream. There was no sign yet of the approach of spring, but even in its winter sleep this living forest was a great change after the silent sands and ruins among which I had dwelt. At the Mazar hospice I enjoyed for one brief afternoon the cheerful warmth of a fireplace and indulged in that long-desired luxury, a thorough 'tub.' But there was plenty to do besides, as I despatched from there my mails to Europe and India with the first notice of my recent discoveries, and also settled all accounts with the labourers and the Sheikhs of the Mazar.

I had all along thought that the Endere ruins might be reached by striking straight across the desert to the east of Imam Jafar Sadik, instead of returning first to Niya and thence marching along the Cherchen road. At first all knowledge of such a direct route was stoutly denied, but in the end one of the shepherds from the Mazar acknowledged that he had more than once visited flocks grazing on the Yartungaz stream, the one flowing into the desert next east of the Niya River. So he and Abdurrahman, a half-crazy devotee of the shrine, who claimed to have paid a visit to those ruins, were engaged as guides, and the 15th of February saw us once more steering amidst the sand dunes. Two miles beyond the Mazar all vegetation was left behind. Then we crossed two steep Dawans rising to about 150 feet and toiled on through high sand-hills for about six miles until large patches of gravel soil were struck where camels and ponies marched with ease. A supply of ice brought along from the Mazar enabled us to camp that evening at a spot