



HALT ON THE MARCH DOWN THE GULCHA VALLEY, FARGHANA.

CHAPTER XXXIII

FROM KHOTAN TO LONDON

THE story of the journey which, within two months of my start from Khotan, brought me back to Kashgar and thence through Russian Turkestan to Europe, can be told here only in the briefest outlines.

Six rapid marches, diversified by Burans and that almost forgotten experience, a "Europe day" with real rain clouds, carried me to Yarkand, where my caravan had safely preceded me. The short halt I was obliged to make there, mainly to settle accounts and to adjust the debts which my several Yarkand followers owed to Hindu money-lenders, coincided with an abnormal burst of rain such as this region had not seen for long years. The downpour continued with short breaks for two days and two nights, until all roads in the oasis were turned into quagmires and the mud-built walls of many houses in town and villages collapsed. In Yarkand city much dis-