

Only when I quoted the old local saying which credits Sarikol with nine months of winter and three of summer, I was asked with a resigned smile to observe that their summer had already commenced. With the biting north wind still sweeping the valley and no leaf as yet on the few solitary poplars and willows, it seemed hard to believe in the reality of this Sarikol summer. My hosts had two little boys who, in spite of all drawbacks, were flourishing; and when on the eve of my departure Madame, prompted by true kindness and an intuitive perception of the weakest point in my camping arrangements, sent me two huge loaves of excellent Cossack bread, I was glad to return this valued gift by a tin of compressed chocolate which I knew would be welcome to the youngsters.

At Tash-kurghan I divided my party. Rai Ram Singh had to be left behind, to start systematic survey work by triangulation from its vicinity. He was then to carry it down a portion of the Tash-kurghan river valley hitherto unexplored, and subsequently to extend it northward across the eastern buttresses of the great Muztagh-ata range. I myself was anxious to reach Kashgar as early as possible, in order to push on there the organization of my caravan, before my old friend and helper, Mr. G. Macartney, C.I.E., the Indian Government's representative, should leave for his summer camp in the hills.

The most direct route to Kashgar was the caravan track which crosses the great spurs radiating from Muztagh-ata to the south and south-east, and as it had not been touched by me before and presented several points of antiquarian interest, I was glad to follow it now. Only I made up my mind to cover its ten regular marches in six days in spite of the baggage. Early on June 3rd I set out from Tash-kurghan and, after selecting with Ram Singh a convenient triangulation base for measurement near Tiznaf, marched down the river through a gloomy and twisting rock defile known as Shindi. This, as well as the still narrower side gorge into which the route turns northward at the small hamlet of Shindi, becomes impassable as soon as the snows melt in earnest, and access to the