

kuans' to receive me, spacious enough to accommodate us all. But their state of cleanliness left much to be desired, in spite of the notice carried ahead by Daroghas; and what with inquisitive Chinese caretakers and other travellers already established there, I found it difficult to secure peace and privacy. These Kung-kuans, intended in the first place to accommodate Mandarins when travelling between their stations, are invariably built after the plan of a Ya-mên, with an outer and inner court separated by those typical double-folding gates which open only for the honoured few while the ordinary mortal passes by the side. The central set of rooms, three in number, always faces this gate and, fronting regularly to the south as Chinese tradition in such buildings requires, is exposed to the full heat of the sun. Of shade under trees or otherwise the wide courtyards offer none, as my camels soon found when stabled there.

So after one red-hot day spent over proofs in the Yangi-hissar rest-house, I preferred to seek refuge in the houses of well-to-do villagers. Again I was struck by the degree of comfort to be found there, far higher than anything in corresponding conditions in India. At Kizil I was delighted to find my former visit remembered, and quarters prepared for me in the house of the Yüz-bashi whose orchard had offered such a pleasant camping-place in September 1900. The trees were now laden with ripening apricots and the ground splashed with big white and black mulberries. But the air was burning hot, fully 105° Fahr. in the shade, and even while sleeping outside in the open court of the house until midnight, it was difficult to get a breath of fresh air. Luckily the sky next morning was laden with yellow haze and clouds, and we managed to cover the twenty-four miles or so across bare stony Dasht to Kök-robot on the northern edge of the Yarkand oasis before 9 A.M. The mere sight of the green fields gave relief, and while working at my proofs all through the day under the mud-covered roof of a villager's loggia, I enjoyed the benefit first of the cooling gusts of an incipient dust-storm and then of a few minutes' rain. The shower was barely enough to lay the dust; yet in a region so exceptionally dry one learns to feel grateful for such favours.