

orchard with beautiful old trees and some approach to a real lawn to afford me an inviting camping-ground. It was watered by a small canal fed by the Kilian River during the summer months. During the busy hours spent there over work, and all through the night, the ripe apricots were dropping on and around my tent. For days past nobody seemed to have troubled to collect this profusion, the housewives of these parts evidently not caring to lay in stores of dried fruit for the winter.

An easy and cool march brought me on the morning of July 27th to Kilian. One learns after the glare and heat of these deserts to appreciate a sky covered with clouds and a breeze fresh from the snow-covered mountains. Of the latter, great peaks showed from time to time between the grey masses of rolling cloud. The Kilian Pass, some three or four marches up the valley, forms one of the approaches to the Upper Kara-kash and the trade-route which leads thence across the Kara-koram to Ladak. So, when I sighted the oasis of Kilian from a broad conglomerate ridge guarding the debouchure of the valley, there was the thought of the high passes southwards to give additional interest to the landscape.

But Kilian itself was a pleasing sight, with its green fields and orchards set between barren yellow cliffs and the sombre grey mountains as a background. The river, too, which we had to ford some two miles below the main oasis, showed by its greyish-green water and its respectable volume that it had come down from perpetual snows. In the orchard which I selected for my camping-ground I lighted upon the traders of a small caravan just about to start with Charas, that precious but mischievous hemp-drug, for Ladak. So while my tent was being pitched I promptly wrote a letter to my learned Tibetan collaborator, the Reverend Mr. Francke, of the Moravian Mission in Leh. It was pleasant to think that my news would thus reach him by the most direct route, even though it would take four weeks or more in transit. When I asked the head trader, a jovial fat Yarkandi, to be sure and take care to deliver the letter, he assured me with a mien of self-satisfied dignity that he was a 'Saudagar' or trader, and thus pledged to a