

uncertainty which followed the Chinese revolution. I was indeed prepared by my previous observations to learn that, in spite of years of plentiful water and abundant harvests, little or no new land had been opened in this part since 1908. Fortunately no signs of such a set-back interfered with the pleasant impressions that I gathered in the course of my forty miles' ride on September 21st to Kāshgar. The route followed, leading in an almost straight line to the north, took me over ground that I had not previously visited and gave an opportunity for some useful mapping by the surveyor, who followed at short stages behind. Beyond the village lands of Āltunluk and Ārtush-bāgh we passed through belts of unreclaimed steppe interspersed with poor cultivation, until, about ten miles farther, we came to the rich lands of the Konasak tract; these extend to the south of the Kūsan-daryā (Map No. 5. A. 2), as the terminal flood-bed of the Kara-tāsh river is here named.

Close to Akhtur-bāzār, the large market centre of this tract, I was able to examine *en route* a ruined town site to which my attention had first been drawn by a reference in the Report of the Forsyth Mission, 1873-4.<sup>15</sup> The 'town of Ak-bāsh Khān', as it is locally called, proved a walled enclosure of roughly quadrangular shape and manifestly of a comparatively late date. Tradition ascribes its construction to Ak-bāsh, a chief of Kirghiz descent, who had founded a settlement here at a period vaguely described as preceding the 'old Khitai' rule, i. e. the Chinese conquest of the middle of the eighteenth century. The general appearance of the circumvallation supports its attribution to late Muhammadan times. Of the irregularly aligned wall faces those to the east, south, and west measured about 129, 144 and 164 yards, respectively. The north face, adjoining the right bank of the Kūsan-daryā, follows an undulating line. Gates could be traced near the centre of all but this front. The lower portion of the enceinte is formed by a rampart of stamped clay rising to an average height of about twenty feet. Above this there is a wall built of sun-dried bricks, measuring 13" × 13" × 2", which in the parts best preserved still stands to a height of about ten feet. At the north-eastern corner it was about ten feet wide at the top, and on it a fragment of the parapet, about 3½ feet thick, survived to a height of close on 7 feet. A cutting made by men digging for manuring earth at the south-western corner of the enclosure showed that the rampart measured there about 31 feet across at a height of about 6 feet from the ground level. No remains of structures were traceable within the walls, nor did I hear of coins or other small objects of a datable character having been found there. Hence the true origin of this circumvallation remains uncertain for the present.

Ruined  
walls at  
Akhtur-  
bāzār.

From Akhtur-bāzār I proceeded across the rich cultivated area of Pārach. A canal passing through it carries water to the Yapchan tract, on the Kāshgar-Yangi-hissār road, and marks the extreme northern limit of irrigation from the Kara-tāsh river. By tracks leading due north I traversed wide belts of fertile but unoccupied land, through which the branching beds of the Yamān-yār or Gez river flow eastwards. Judging from the big volume of water carried down by these beds during spring and summer, there seems opportunity here for much reclamation. Finally I reached the wide area of unbroken cultivation which receives its water from the river-system of Kāshgar, and on passing the Telwichuk bed near Pakhtakla (Map No. 2. D. 2) found myself back on ground that I remembered well from my first stay at Kāshgar in 1900. Before nightfall I had the satisfaction of arriving at the British Consulate General, and enjoying once more the kindest welcome under the ever hospitable roof of my old friend Sir George Macartney.

Arrival at  
Kāshgar.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Forsyth, *Yarkand Mission Report*, p. 38.