

(Map No. 20. B. 4), and the only water obtainable since the previous October had been drawn from slightly brackish wells. From local information I gathered that cultivation at Eshme, now carried on by about forty-five families, had completely ceased before the Chinese reconquest and had been since revived only by forcible colonization. An old cultivated area, overgrown by scrub and in places by wild poplars of large size, was said to be traceable over ground extending two or three miles below the present fields. The local belief was that the water-supply had diminished since old times. Yet scanty as it is at present, the limits of the area actually under tillage seemed to be gradually expanding even now, owing to increased traffic on the high road and administrative efforts to facilitate it by stimulating production. It seemed a good illustration of the importance of the human factor in determining cultivation in this region, independently of possible changes in the conditions which affect the water-supply.

## SECTION II.—THE SEAT OF THE PROTECTOR GENERAL

Oasis of  
Chādir.

Chādir, the next oasis reached after a march of about ten miles from Eshme, is a more considerable place than those we had previously passed on the road from Korla. It is watered by a stream which, as Lāl Singh's survey showed (Map No. 20. B. 4), descends from the high watershed of the range towards Yulduz and at times during the summer brings down big rain floods. These apparently add greatly to the irrigation resources of Chādir, otherwise confined to about one *tāsh* ('stone') of water, which just suffices to work a single stone for three months in each of the half-dozen mills placed one below the other. Here, too, the population was said to have considerably increased since pre-rebellion times, being reckoned now at 160 households. The greybeards and headmen whom I examined during a halt of a couple of hours knew of no abandoned cultivated area below the present oasis, apart from the previously mentioned site of Aghrak (or Argharak). At that place spasmodic attempts to resume cultivation had been made in recent years by people from Yangi-hissār, and to these I shall refer farther on.

Road  
beyond  
Chādir.

Chinese scholars writing in the eighteenth century, after the conquest of the 'New Dominion', have proposed to locate at Chādir the small territory of *Wu-lei*, which the 'Notes on the Western Regions' in the Former Han Annals often mention as the seat of the Protector General.<sup>1</sup> Before, however, we examine this identification it will be advisable to record my observations with regard to the two larger oases of Yangi-hissār and Bugur, to which the high road westwards takes the traveller next after leaving Chādir. For about ten miles from the western edge of the Chādir oasis the road led, first through fine open grazing, then through Toghrak jungle, before the easternmost patch of Yangi-hissār cultivation was reached at the Mazār of Kara-chacha-atā. We had to cross three more miles of scrub-covered ground and a deep-cut bed said to carry floods at times as far south as Aghrak, before we arrived at the area of continuous tillage. It looked very rich and smiling, with plenty of fine old trees along the main road and in the Bēg's or Shang-yeh's orchard where we camped.

Oasis of  
Yangi-  
hissār.

Yangi-hissār is undoubtedly an oasis of old date, but the reclaiming of new land is slowly but steadily proceeding. According to the statements that I collected, the oasis, including the outlying villages of Manjuluk to the north-east and Kara-kum to the south, now comprises about eight hundred households, a figure which agrees well with the extent of its permanently cultivated area as shown by our surveys in different directions. In addition to the area under regular tillage various pieces of land in the jungle belt to the south are periodically cleared and sown, when specially heavy

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, xi. p. 95, note 3.