

SECTION III.—REMAINS SOUTH-EAST OF KUCHĀ AND LIST OF ANTIQUES FOUND OR ACQUIRED

Canal head
near
*Duldul-
okur* site.

On April 29th I continued my return march to Kuchā from the north-eastern extremity of the village tract of Ugen. On the way I passed the ruined Buddhist temples known as *Duldul-okur*, and was able to collect the data already recorded concerning the three large canals which actually take off from the western bank of the Muz-art river below that site, a true *su-bāshi*. Local tradition asserts that in past times the lands on that side of the river were watered by eight canals; and in fact the lines of three more large canals, all abandoned and unmistakably old, were found crossing the narrow strip of bare ground which separates the ruins of *Duldul-okur* from the present canal heads. Whether there would nowadays be sufficient water in the river to fill these canals, as well as the others, early enough for the needs of irrigation appeared very doubtful.

Mound of
*Kotluk-
ordu*.

I used my single day's halt at Kuchā on April 30th to visit the large but badly decayed ruined mound known as *Kotluk-ordu*, where Mīr Sharīf and other local informants stated that the famous Bower manuscript and other important texts in Sanskrit and Kuchean, brought to India in 1891 and subsequently edited by the late Dr. Hoernle, had been discovered. The mound is situated about half a mile to the SSW. of the south-western corner of the town and not far from the point where the road leading to Kosh-tura passes beyond the limit of cultivation. I found that it was oblong in shape and constructed of clay, measuring about 54 yards by 32, and bearing at its north-western end what looked like the base of a completely destroyed Stūpa. Here the mound still rose some 20 feet above the level of the surrounding fields. On the east a terrace about 14 yards wide adjoined it on a lower level, and beyond this again could be traced an enclosure, about 44 yards square, marked by low mounds, much decayed. The whole appeared to be the ruin of some large sanctuary; but long-continued digging for earth to manure the fields, and treasure-seeking operations on a large scale, had reduced its remains almost beyond recognition. Another smaller mound a short distance to the south had been even more thoroughly overturned, and was now half buried in sand. It was here that Mīr Sharīf said that he had secured a great haul of ancient manuscripts, when digging with a number of other men about twenty-eight years before. The spoils were divided and sold by them, partly to Afghān traders; through these they reached Captain (now General) Bower and Mr. (now Sir George) Macartney and thus first drew the serious attention of European scholars to the antiquities preserved in the soil of the Tārīm basin.

March to
*Khanak-
atam*.

A march of over thirty miles on May 1st brought me to *Khanak-atam*, a small village tract at the southern extremity of the irrigated area on the left bank of the Muz-art river. From here Mīr Sharīf proposed to show me certain ancient sites with which he was familiar, owing to their being within easy reach of some farm land which he owned in the district. The road followed took us, after we had proceeded some three miles, to *Ara-buk*, the southern limit of the ground capable of irrigation from the Kuchā river. Beyond this point, wide stretches of scrubby steppe alternated with belts of cultivation, mostly narrow, extending along the terminal portions of the main canals which take off from the Muz-art river. In all these belts we heard complaints that the water was inadequate for the land available, and as the adjoining waste ground was stated to be equally fertile, it was easy to realize how different an aspect this area may have presented in former times, when, owing to a larger volume of water in the river, the whole of it may have been kept under continuous cultivation.

Defective
irrigation
and 'new
cultivation'.

As we passed down along the canal, then still dry, which serves the lands of *Bostān* and *Khanak-atam* (Map No. 17. c. 2), I was struck by the contrast between the fine large arbours near the scattered farms and the neglected look of the fields. This phenomenon, in a tract which had