

14—15 miles from our bivouac the stream we had been following joined the river Uruk in which there was a good deal of water. We crossed a bridge built of crooked tree-trunks and to judge by the fact that people were sitting drying their packs in the sun, the ford must be deep. Here lie the ruins of Karanglik, a Chinese fort built in the form of a square (on the 40 verst map) with 4 corner turrets. The length of the walls is about 27 feet, the crumbling moat is about 7 feet wide. Clay walls 10 1/2 feet high, with battlements and loopholes, in comparatively good condition. The district was still barren. Poor grass on the stony soil in the river valley itself, but the mountain slopes devoid of vegetation. The folds in the ground grew more marked — everywhere the stony soil cut through the bare clay surface. The mountains were lower and the small patches of snow we could still see yesterday and during the previous days were disappearing altogether. SE of Karanglik the road turns E, leaving the river behind, proceeds for barely 7 miles between rocks on a low plateau and comes out into the Ming-yul valley, where we pitched our camp in a shady little village of the same name. There was a small barracks surrounded by a mud wall and intended for the men of the Chinese post. Among some caravanserais and other houses a temple-like building, surrounded by stones and built of planks with gaps between them, had been erected here to commemorate the reconquest of Kashgaria by the Chinese. I put up in a caravanserai, small but pleasant thanks to some shady trees on either side of a little ariq that rushed and roared like a cataract. A primitive mill that ground as much as 70 lbs a day was built on it. — Lying on a coloured rug spread out by my host in the shade of the trees I wrote up my diary in the brilliant moonlight.

On the way I enjoyed the company of my host of yesterday, one of the Kirghiz elders travelling to Kashgar on official business. He thought that the Kirghiz in Russian Turkestan were better off than those in China. The taxes in the latter per kikitka are equal to about 360 lbs and about 10 roubles in cash, besides 1 sheep in the form of tax for every 50 or even 100 sheep and 1 sheep for every additional 100. — During the day I shot a wild duck.

I left at 6 a.m. without waiting for the caravan. The road continues along the same stony river bed on which Ming-yul lies. At a short distance from the village stands a picturesque ruined tower on the steep bank. The road leads SE into a barren stony valley enclosed on the N and S by chains of mountains running east, the northern chain gradually growing level with the horizon. The southern chain, considerably loftier, has a majestic chain of mountains with perpetual snow in the background. The desolate scenery, the ancient bottom of a sea covered with large stones, is devoid of any vegetation, and is intersected here and there by an arm of the Uruk whose inconsiderable muddy waters murmur along in an easterly direction. Far to the east a green belt seems to indicate the limit of the Kashgar oasis. Now and then we met a company of Kashgarliks (the Sart population of Kashgar), men and women mounted on horses or asses. The richer men rode with open umbrellas of European make. The women wore a more becoming garb than the Sarts in Russian Turkestan. The long, thick coats thrown over the dress and the black veil over the face were replaced by a transparent coat of white muslin,

*August
30th.
Kashgar.*