



*The author outside his house in Kashgar.*

A number of cases have been left behind in Kashgar in a shed kindly placed at my disposal by the manager of the bank, and with the rest loaded on to 3 pack-horses I am now on my way. I have two new yigits, one of whom has served for a long time as cook to some of the Swedish missionaries and performs the same functions for me. Rakhimjanoff, the Cossack, partly dressed in Kirghiz garb, is in charge of my little caravan. In order to force myself more energetically to speak Chinese (I cannot dissuade Ljo from answering me in Russian which is quite as good as my Chinese) I have made an arrangement with an elderly Chinaman from Khunnan. For 25 roubles a month, his board and 2 horses hired by me for himself and his servant, he is to accompany me on the journey.

It is always difficult to make a start after staying in a place for some time. My pack-horses did not get off until about 10 a.m. and I followed at noon. The road that leads south is good and for the most part suitable for wheeled traffic. For heavy vehicles, such as baggage vans, a couple of bridges would require strengthening slightly 4 or 5 miles south of Yangi-Shahr you cross an arm of the Qizil Su by a bridge that is not sound. The river is not too deep, however, to be crossed alongside the bridge. Its width is 21—24 feet. A little further on the road leads over a still less formidable river, a tributary of the former. 4 or 5 miles north of Yapchan the road is bisected by the river Oi Kobrek, flowing in several arms over which bridges have been thrown with the help of some sandbanks and islets. The bridges require some slight repairs but in ordinary conditions it is possible to wade across the river. During the spring floods it submerges the flat valley, some miles in width, through which it has cut its way, and then traffic is interrupted for about a fortnight. There would be no great difficulty in building an embankment along the river. — The district traversed is very sandy in places. The soil is cultivated everywhere except in the sandiest places, but is exhausted and in need of manure.

Shortly before reaching the river Oi Kobrek the road joins another rather more westerly