



*A clay building in the desert SE of Qizil, erected to enable detachments of Chinese troops to rest. My Cossack Rakhimjanoff, my Chinese interpreter and a Chinese colonel in the foreground.*

a copy of the Koran to make up the balance, could lure them. It was impossible to overcome their obstinacy.

At 7 a.m. on the 11th the caravan set off and three-quarters of an hour later I followed with my two Chinese and Rakhimjanoff. The road leads SSE through the oasis towards the hills that you cross after a ride of 10 minutes at a walk. Immediately beyond this slight ridge of sandhills lies an uneven area of sand-dunes of rugged shape. The higher mountain ranges that have a layer of snow in some places and are visible long before you reach Yangi Hissar from the north, make a bend to the SSE and run parallel to the road. To the east a river appears, flowing from S to N; it soon skirts the road and proves to be a large ariq, Manshin üstang. Before crossing the ariq the road runs for a time along the edge of the water, on the opposite side of which fertile fields appear that extend to the western side further on. The road divides about 2 1/2 miles from the town. One branch continues in the same direction to Saryal; the other, which we take, goes NE for about half-a-mile, when it encounters a deep river-bed with very little water, the river Shagildik (Sargan lik? Saygan should, perhaps, be Sargan, for the people in Yarkand often sound a »y« for an »r«) which runs northward. The bridge over the river is in need of repair; building materials could be obtained from the trees in the vicinity. From close to the bridge a large ariq Lakday tugemen has been cut to the NNW and draws more water from the river than seems right, at any rate at this season of the year. The difference in the level of the water between the river and the ariq is very considerable and once more provides evidence of the thoroughness of the irrigation work done by the population. On the way through the oasis we met several groups of a few dozen Sarts on their way to Thursday's bazaar in the town with horses, asses, oxen and various produce. From the bridge the road definitely takes a SE direction and leads into a veritable desert, the desolate appearance of which is only partially relieved by the fine chain of mountains that seems to branch off gradually from the road, to the west. A green ribbon of trees, probably indicating the course of a river, stretches along the foot of the mountains. No trace of vegetation along