

luted air. The road took us south. After deviating slightly a couple of times to the SSE and SSW it proceeds in a southerly direction as far as Posgam. The neighbourhood south of Yarkand consists of fertile fields cut up into small rectangles surrounded by very low walls, so that for a certain part of the year they can be kept under water. Long rows of willows or poplars that intersect each other are planted along the edges of the fields, contributing very much to the beauty of the view, especially in the summer. Numbers of ariqs and small channels intersect the fields in different directions, often crossing the road. The bridges are made of round tree-trunks and are fit for all kinds of vehicles.

At noon we reached the wide bed of the river Yarkand darya. The water was so low at this season that it was unnecessary to use the four barges hauled up on to the bank, though their presence indicated that for a long time during the year it was impossible to ride across the river. The bed of the river consists of sand and boulders of different sizes. On the other side of the river-bed, about a mile and three-quarters wide at this place, the ground is sandy and the fields poor. Here and there you see white layers of salt.

We reached Posgam, a large village, shortly before 2 p. m. By the mandarin's orders rooms had been reserved for me in one of the numerous and large houses of the local government tax-collecting station. At about the same time as myself an old mandarin of 70 arrived on his way from his present district to the north to replace another, who had had to give up his post on the death of his mother. It is a strange law that a Chinese mandarin is relieved of his post for three years in the event of either of his parents dying. This custom is probably due to the important position occupied in the life of a Chinaman in all its phases by his parents. During my stay in Yarkand there was a feast one day with free entertainment for all who honoured the mandarin by a visit. Presents were brought from far and near and he himself distributed gratuities to people who came to congratulate him. The day was said to have cost him a couple of thousand lan, but it was unknown how much it brought in for him. It was the birthday of his aged mother that was celebrated in such a ceremonious manner.

*November 21st.*

*Karghalik.*

The dressing down I gave my men for their slackness yesterday morning made them come and wake me at 3.30 a.m., they themselves having been called by the cook at 12.30, as he thought it was morning. As a result I felt constrained to give them one of the two alarm clocks I had brought with me. But none of the four keys would fit one of them, while the other, which I was able to wind up, refused to go. If the remaining 15 are in as good a state, I can scarcely give them away as presents. One ought to be a sort of jack of all trades on a journey like this, watchmaker, manufacturer of cameras, doctor, armourer, optician and heaven knows what.

We started in good time to-day. The pack-horses were off at 7 and I followed in my arbah with Rakhimjanoff and Ljo at 8. The road goes south all the time with very slight bends. It was as good as it was yesterday, though much dustier. There was far less water, so that we were spared the jolting bridges. About 45 metres from the town the road is intersected by a small river Bishkumistan that flows here from S to N from the Yarkand darya until it is lost in the Dsjengalock marsh or swamp. A viaduct and a bridge lead