

wise there is no vegetation. During these two days I saw no sign of animal life except two small birds with black, white and yellow plumage and yesterday at a great distance a wild boar. The tracks of these latter seem to be rare here. There is a very slight, scarcely perceptible undulation in the ground, the crests starting from the chain of mountains at intervals of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The road converges slightly on the mountain and by the time darkness fell, when the latter definitely turned NW, they were not more than 300 yards apart.

After riding incessantly for over 11 hours in grey and chilly weather we reached the Ja darya, flowing eastward from Kelpin, about 6.30 p.m. and immediately afterwards one of the southernmost farms in the village of Achal. During these two days the road was excellent along these plains, on which scarcely any change of level is noticeable. Although the sand is rather deep in some parts, it would be an excellent road for wheeled traffic, if only there were some water. From Achal situated on the road from Kelpin to the highway from Aqsu to Kashgar, you can reach Aqsu at a normal pace in 4 days, so that you gain two days from Maral Bashi by this road. Chilan on the Aqsu highway is about 6 paotai from Achal. The village was founded about 25 years ago. Although it has an area of about 5,000 mou of fields, there are only about 40 houses. The water shortage, and the poor quality of the soil and its salt content only allow of part of the area being tilled annually. Wheat yields up to a 10 fold crop, corn up to 8 and 10 fold. Maize is not grown, but melons are. The livestock averages about $\frac{1}{4}$ horse, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cow, 2 asses and 5—6 sheep per household of about 3 adults. 3 burans in the spring, 1 in the autumn. We all slept in a large room with wooden pillars or poles, in which the wind roared, but after a night in the open it seemed quite comfortable.

February 12th.
Kelpin village.

To check the last piece of yesterday's map, which I had drawn in the dark, I retraced my steps to the spot where the road crosses the road from Kelpin over Jaidedigan langar (13 houses) to Chilan and then took this road. On the right, i.e., on the N and NW, lies an enormous mass of mountains, Inyang tagh, which appears at first to take a direction from NE to SW, but gradually assumes a more and more westerly direction and runs practically parallel to our road to-day, a few miles north of it. Quite close to the village the sandy hillocks and toghraq begin. For a couple of hours they are so high that they prevent your seeing the lie of the land except between them. A quarter of an hour from the village we crossed the frozen Ja darya, about 5 fathoms broad at this place, coming from Kelpin and winding in a deep bed with steep banks. The water is said to be slightly salt. After heavy rain it may be difficult to ford for two or three days.

In half-an-hour we reached the Kelpin road, turned sharp to the west and continued WSW against a penetrating wind and in grey, chilly weather. On the left we had yesterday's mountains that had also taken a westerly direction and now ran fairly parallel to our road, though much nearer than the mountains in the N. They were lower here than in their S—N direction and seemed to be broken up into several ridges. Another half-hour and the road led us past a series of green sandy hillocks, covered with the same greenish gravel that I noticed yesterday. As they are a good distance from the chain of mountains