

than grass. At the beginning of the gorge the guide showed me with great pride an inscription in a red colour. It is about 2 1/2 fathoms above the level of the ground and is in two parts on two slight projections of the mountain wall, one above the other. Someone very agile might possibly reach the place without assistance, but it would require the help of others to paint some hieroglyphics there. I consider it impossible, however, that these red signs should have withstood the elements for centuries, besides which they resemble the European alphabet, Latin and Russian, too much for me to believe that they are anything but a joke perpetrated by someone not very long ago. Not far off, at the end of the gorge, we found some more similar signs at about the same height, but so worn that it was impossible to copy them.

To-day I decided to sacrifice 3 or 4 days in order to visit the stones in Chal Kode that I have already referred to. I hear from people who have seen them, that they look as though they had been carved by human hands. Horses had been obtained, fodder and meat had been bought, when late last night the guide, whom I had engaged with much difficulty, informed me that the road was in such a condition that travelling with pack-horses was not to be thought of until later in the spring. The road, which leads across a high and difficult mountain, is of such a nature that the horses have to jump large bits of rock which is impossible at present in view of the ice and snow. If a horse takes a false step, it goes down a precipice. As I cannot sacrifice my own horses and the road across and from the mountain is too long to be done on foot, there was nothing for it but to abandon the idea of this expedition.

In two villages that I visited I found some dissimilarities from the places I have seen so far in Chinese Turkestan. Instead of each landowner having his farm separately, surrounded by his strips of field, several seem to be grouped together here and to build a joint farm, on which each family has its own house or its own room or rooms. They go in for joint housekeeping and all have their meals together. The tilled area per farm is larger here than in parts I have visited earlier, the water supply is sufficient, the number of cattle larger, but there seems to be insufficient manure. The crop varies from 5 and 8 fold for wheat and 25—80 fold for maize. On third category land it is apparently even less. According to other informants 1 tcherak of seed yields 6—8 tcheraks on I category land, 4 tch. on II category and 2 tch. on III category. 1 tcherak of maize yields 10 tch. on I, 7 tch. on II and 4 tch. on III category land. Strangely enough the land area is calculated here per hou, not per mou as in the rest of Chinese Turkestan. Even in Aqyar, which has been joined on to the Uch Turfan district for some years, the mou is considered the unit of land. I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory explanation of this difference. It is said that, when the Chinese wanted to divide the land per mou after conquering the country, the population was dissatisfied, as they got too little land. In Yaqub Beg's time the unit was a »tanap», which did not correspond either to the mou or the hou, besides which the land area does not depend on the unit.

According to information from Chinese sources, there are said to be 30,000 hou of fields (i.e. 600,000 mou) in the Uch Turfan district. According to the statement of the Russian aksakal, the total field area amounts to 350,000 mou plus about 5,000 mou of