

and I had already called on all the officials in the Chinese town. At the appointed time I sent the man a horse, but after waiting for six hours it brought me instead of Mr Ma a note written in English, informing me that he could not possibly come, because he had remembered that it was his father's birthday (his father having long ago departed to a better world). Instead he would come »the day after after to-morrow«. I was not going to wait so long, so I decided to start for the Yarkand darya »the day before the day after after to-morrow« in order to make a map from there along the river to the bridges over the Taushqan darya or Aqsu darya as it is called after combining with the latter river. To reach the spot, where the Aqsu darya joins the river Yarkand, I chose the more northerly of the two roads that lead southward along both banks of the former river. I proposed to return along the southern bank.

From the Sart town of Aqsu the road took us over the ridge or plateau of löss that I have mentioned already, in which it has cut a track as much as 5 m in depth. For about $3\frac{1}{2}$ —4 miles before reaching the plateau the road runs along the foot of a ledge cut vertically in it, about 5 fathoms high. Here the bed of the river Aqsu lay once upon a time, but it has since moved westward. For fear of its again returning to its old easterly course, destroying everything in its path, the inhabitants have built an embankment close to the bed of the river, and this is strengthened every year at the season of high-water by 1,000—1,200 labourers sent there by the authorities. The road runs along the eastern wall of the Chinese town, on the outside. We rode along a Sart bazaar street of a respectable length. The Sart bazaar that has grown up to the north and east of the Chinese town does not seem to be much smaller than the whole of the old Sart town. From this place the road takes a SSE direction and leads through tilled and well cared-for fields. On the right we passed a charming little Chinese theatre, surrounded by a wall. Its straw awnings gave it something of a Japanese touch. On the left we saw the crenellated wall of the barracks of a cavalry detachment. Half-an-hour from Yangi-Shahr we passed the Qarasak mazar. Just beyond the Dolan üstang, flowing from the Aqsu darya, about 5 fathoms wide and with a swift current, crosses the road. Some fields and the road itself in places show signs of moisture. The farms look better cared for and are less numerous than in the southern part of the country. Immediately beyond the precincts of the town the village of Igerchi begins with its 50 houses, succeeded by the village of Langarchi also with about 50 houses. An hour from the town we reached the much larger village of Choktal and took some time in crossing the area occupied by its 200 houses. At the end of it the road reaches the bed of the Aqsu darya, $1\frac{1}{3}$ — $1\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile wide, flat and with grass growing in some places. It flows in 9 arms here, the main arm, on the south, being so full of water for a month to six weeks that no crossing can be effected except by means of the barges that carry the traffic on the Kashgar-Aqsu road. For the rest of the year the depth probably does not exceed 1 m 10 cm and there is no difficulty in fording the river. The banks are marshy in places, however, but according to the local population even these places are passable. The river has cut a bed here a couple of fathoms in depth. Soon after the road has debouched into the river bed, or approximately $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours from the town, the village of Kumbash with about 350 houses begins. Three-quarters of an hour later we reached