

well cultivated, and the road good. We crossed the Aksu river, divided into many branches, a mile wide in all, the water in the deep channels being waist-deep. Further on we passed the small village of Aral, and the next day arrived at Ush Turfan.

This is a picturesque little town at the foot of a rugged hill, with a fort on its summit. There is a good bazaar here, and I met in it an old man who had been one of Yakoob Beg's chief secretaries, but was now in very poor circumstances. He could only mumble away rather indistinctly, but when he saw me he uttered the word "Shaw," and I immediately asked the people to question him, and found out that he had had a great deal to do with my uncle, and had a great regard for him. I was getting now, in fact, into country where people were constantly met with who knew Shaw and the members of the Forsyth Mission, and the interest of the journey increased. In Central Asia changes of *personnel* are sharp and radical. One year Yakoob Beg is unknown; the next he rules a vast country, and is surrounded by courtiers and great officers of state. For a short time they remain in power, and then they are swept clean away, and Chinese rule in their place. Of the men who were all-powerful at the time of Sir Douglas Forsyth's Mission, and Shaw's last journey in the country, only eleven years before my visit, but very very few remained, and those in the poorest circumstances. But it was interesting to meet them, and get them to talk of better days, and the state and grandeur which they had known.

After leaving Ush Turfan, we passed through a country cultivated at first, but afterwards relapsing into the more or less barren condition which is characteristic of the district. The sides of the hills which bounded the valley we were ascending were not, however, so utterly barren as many we had passed. There was a good deal of scrub and small bushes on them, and, higher up, fine grassy slopes in places. At the end of