

and the Tibiz, the last and southern of these it is whose waters surround the head of, and afterwards mingle with, the river of Yangí-Hissár. There is also no doubt that the waters of the northern branches mingle with, if indeed they are not identical with, the Yámunyár river (also called Tasgún, Khánárik, Oi Kubok, and a host of other names). The latter river issues from or near the smaller of the two Lakes Kárakúl (of which more hereafter) and passes from the hills near the villages of Tash-bálig and Opal. The whole of the country south of Káshghar is cut up by one net-work of canals mingled in such confusion that nothing but a careful survey can lead to a clear comprehension of them* and moreover day by day they alter, and I have often seen one canal (in appearance more like a large river than anything else) eating its way rapidly through the soft soil into another one. These changes are constantly going on, and a map constructed now would be of but little value fifty years hence.

After leaving the village of Sugat the road follows for nine miles, along the edge of a water-course through a stony plain, a narrow border of green showing signs of a scant cultivation. This brings us to our first halting-place, the good-sized village of Ighiz-yar, two miles short of which we pass on the left a conspicuous isolated conical hill with a zyarat (tomb) at top. Before reaching the village a few low hills come in sight on the west, being the ends of the low spurs coming down from the Kizil Art mountains, the first portion of these mountains that we had seen since leaving Káshghar. With our usual ill luck, from the day of our departure, the characteristic Eastern Turkestan haze entirely obscured all view of the lofty mountains on the west, preventing the possibility of forming any opinion as to the shape and direction of the spurs from the main ridge. From Káshghar on a clear day we have often seen the outlines of these hills standing out against the sky, but the distance, to the crest of the range, 70 miles, was much too great to permit of the intervening ranges or spurs being visible. I often longed to make a nearer acquaintance with them, but no opportunity ever occurred for doing so. Fortunately on the upward journey to Káshghar, the Pundit, who followed some days behind us, had some clear days, and was able to fix very satisfactorily the positions of several of the peaks of the main range.

On the second day we marched in a south-west direction, for 18 miles, to Aktala (white plain). The first four miles were up a gently rising stony plain, almost entirely destitute of vegetation, and extending to the entrance of the Kinkol valley, which runs between two spurs of which we had caught a glimpse the previous day. At a distance of two miles up the valley the road passes the foot of an old extensive fortification called "Khatt (lower) Karáwul" constructed by the Chinese on the left bank of the river, to defend themselves against incursions from the Kirghiz marauders from the Pámirs and the Alai. It is built on a commanding position running along a spur which nearly closes up the entrance of the valley. A garrison consisting of only a few sepoys, attests the fact that the Amír's rule has reduced these tribes to order and obedience. Two miles further up is Kichik (small) Karáwul, where a road along an open ravine on the left bank leads direct *viâ* Opal to Káshghar, and a Kirghiz footpath along a ravine on the opposite side leads to Yárkand.

* A great source of difficulty in investigating the courses of rivers in Eastern Turkestan is their nomenclature, every portion of a stream having a different name, derived from the nearest village, by which alone it is known to the neighbouring inhabitants. In addition to these purely local designations travellers generally name the rivers after the different large towns situated on their banks, while cosmopolitans have occasionally general names which they apply to a river throughout its whole course, but which are perhaps unknown to the inhabitants of the country. Most rivers are also occasionally known by names expressive their color as Kara-Su, Kizil-Su, or Kok-Su, or Ak-Su (Turki, for black, red, blue, and white rivers), terms which may be seen broadcast in almost any map of Central Asia. No river of Eastern Turkestan carries the same name from its cradle to its grave in the big Tarim Gol or Ergol, which swallows up all the rivers of Eastern Turkestan except those that lose themselves in the desert before they reach it. The final end of the Tarim still remains, and I fear must remain, a matter of mystery. It is generally supposed to flow into Lake Lope (Lob, or Luf); but I have recently heard, on what I considered fairly trustworthy evidence, that at about 25 miles south of its junction with the Karashahr River, *i.e.*, about 65 miles south of Kola (Koila or Kurla), it disappears in the sand near the village of Lop (Lop being I believe a Sanskrit word signifying disappearance). It is further said to reappear in the shape of a large navigable stream at the Chinese city of Saju (? Suchat). I should myself think that it more probably reappears in the marshes and lakes which are believed to exist to the eastward and south-eastward of the still somewhat mythical Lake of Lop. Perhaps Mr. Prjevalski will some day enlighten us on this matter from the east.