

ally investigated this great physical change over widely distant parts of Asia belongs to my friend Mr. Ellsworth Huntington. After having with this object in view in the autumn of 1905 carefully studied the physiography of the region east of Khotan, he did not fail to lay special stress in his fascinating volume, *The Pulse of Asia*, on this well-authenticated change in the area of cultivation, for which shrinkage in the amount of available water-supply seemed to offer the simplest explanation.

Yet there were also indications of special local conditions which might have influenced the change. I remembered what a tradition heard on the occasion of my first visit in 1901 asserted about such shifts of the cultivated land, backwards and forwards, having occurred repeatedly in the case of Domoko. The opening of the Malak-alagan colony fully six miles to the north of the centre of the present oasis looked curiously like an illustration of the reverse movement northward having already set in. That the number of settlers at Malak-alagan had increased considerably since 1901, and that its irrigation was now being extended even towards the long-abandoned fields of Old Domoko, I had learned when stopping there on my way to Khadalik. But of the peculiar conditions of water-supply to which this interesting colony owed its origin and development I could obtain a clear idea only as I marched from Khadalik south to Domoko and the alleged old site near Mazar-toghrak.

Going westwards from Khadalik we soon struck the Domoko Yar close to the point where its stream, lively but shallow, is dammed up in order to feed the canal leading to Malak-alagan. Then we followed upwards the broad reed-covered depression of the Domoko Yar, flanked on either side by closely set tamarisk cones and looking, with its numerous branches now all dry, like the bed of a stream once far larger. After about three miles we reached the eastern edge of the present oasis, and exchanged the dreary waste of scrub-covered sand-hills for scenery far more cheerful. The ground we had to pass through for the next few miles on our way south was all 'yangi kent' ('new land'), having been brought under cultivation only