

for about twenty to twenty-five years. Many old sand-cones, once, no doubt, covered with tamarisks, but now bared by seekers for fuel, still rose above the levelled fields, and had often been made use of as building ground for the scattered homesteads. Otherwise the soil seemed very carefully cultivated, and the lanes were all lined with dense hedges. Then we skirted on our right the older part of the oasis as transferred here about the forties of the nineteenth century, until the line of the Shakül canal we were following struck the high road leading to Keriya.

All the cultivated ground south of the road was declared to be 'new land,' gradually added to the oasis in the course of the last thirty years, and there in the hamlet of Dash I found a large and delightfully shady garden near a well-to-do villager's farm in which to leave my camp. Riding southward along the canal for another one and a half miles I reached the great 'Tugh' or dyke by which the waters of the Domoko stream are safeguarded for the main oasis.

It was quite an imposing piece of engineering, as things go in the Tarim Basin, which I saw before me. A dam nearly 200 yards long and of very solid construction closed the head of the Domoko Yar, rising more than thirty feet above its marshy bottom. The whole dyke consisted of stamped earth with thick layers of brushwood at short intervals. Its top was broad enough to permit a wide road to pass. On the south thick rows of willow trees guarded its side towards a large sheet of water, formed by the stream of Domoko close to the point where the canals of the oasis absorb its water. The depression southward holding the stream looked broad and shallow. Very different was the appearance of the Domoko Yar which formed the natural continuation of this stream-bed northward. It presented itself here as a well-marked winding ravine, deeply cut into the loess soil between steep banks fully sixty to eighty feet high. Thick growth of reeds and coarse grass in the basin forming its head indicated the presence of springs; but there appeared no course of flowing water.

I had heard of this dam during my stay at Khadalik; but only on the spot could I realize properly its signifi-