

expanse of the *saj*. This is, as I have already indicated, seldom broken by any departure from the dead level, and even then the elevation is trifling.

Next we travelled almost due N. 35° E., still keeping to the watercourse, which now wound but little. Here, where there is a more copious supply of water from the mountains, the steppe scrub flourishes rather better. By this the ascent had become perceptible to the eye. In this eroded trench we came across some pieces of driftwood, at first rather sparingly, but afterwards more numerous; it consisted of *kara-jaghatsch*, *suget* or *tal* (willow), and tamarisks, and evidently had been washed by the torrents out of the glen of the Suget-bulak, where these three varieties of tree grow. On both sides of us we had the vertical *jars*, or »erosion terraces», which shut in the trench of the Suget-bulak, at first some distance apart, though afterwards they approached closer together. They are built up chiefly of fine material in different layers of varying thickness. They measure 2 to 3 m. in vertical face, and embrace no big blocks. In two or three places on the left or eastern side we found a few small snow-drifts still surviving, showing that snow falls in winter even in this locality. In the middle of the watercourse there occur a few table-topped, or cubical fragments of erosion terraces, which have been modelled by the torrent. The trumpet-shaped mouth of the glen grew more and more distinct, and eventually the lower spurs of the mountains began to rise on both sides of us. At the point where we halted in the middle of the watercourse, the eastern *jar* was still distinct; but on the opposite side its place was taken by hard rock, a species of stone friable and weathered beyond recognition, lying 65° N.W. A rivulet of gloriously limpid water, issuing from the spring of Suget-bulak, trickled along its foot, and beside it stands the solitary willow (*suget*) from which the spring derives its name. The spring itself is said to lie a short day's journey up the glen from its mouth. The water that issues from it is stated to form a not inconsiderable brook, with a lively musical flow, though a good deal of the water is lost amongst the gravel on its way down. My guide, Abdu Rehim, asserted that once and again, after a violent rain, the little glen will be filled from side to side with a tumultuous torrent, though none of it ever gets down as far as the Kontsche-darja. The freshets that arise from the melting of the snow in spring are on the other hand always trivial.

From the exit of the glen it is reported to be 10 *potaj* up to Altun-keni (kan), or the gold-mine, where some half a hundred Tungans, Chinese, and Mongols, but no Mussulmans, collect gold-dust in the bed of the stream.

By making use of the glen of Suget-bulak one can, in three or four days, reach the Baghrasch-köl, although there is no track in the proper sense of the term, and on the way one has to surmount a pretty difficult pass, which horses and asses can just manage to get over at a pinch. In the upper part of the valley *kara-jaghatsch* occurs, and on and about the pass *artschin* or *artscha* (i. e. juniper); both these species appear to be conifers. Snow is said to lie on the pass for five months, disappearing finally towards the end of April. The snow which falls in October and the beginning of November does not remain on the ground, but melts away. According to Abdu Rehim, it was two days' journey from Suget-bulak to the nearest Mongols, who, with their flocks of sheep, lead a nomad existence in these moun-