

Some of the rugged buttresses of the range on our right approached quite close to the route. Then we crossed over yet another low saddle; and it was after that that we first came into contact with the Tibetan nomads, men looking after 700 sheep. We pitched our tent not far from theirs. We were still at a considerable altitude, for Camp XLIX stood at 5005 m., while the highest of the passes which we had crossed over reached 5113 m.

These Tibetans told me, that the name of that locality is Gom-dschima, and that the range which we had had on our right, and which rose immediately south-west of our camp, is called Haramuk-lurumak. The name of the river which we had seen on our left at some distance away, and towards which we gradually drew nearer on the following day, is the Gartschi-sängi. The locality in which we had pitched Camp XLVIII — they recognised it again from our description — is called Merik. These names are, I think, quite trustworthy, for later on I had the means of checking one or two of them, and found them perfectly correct.

Aug. 1st. From the tributary of the Gartschi-sängi, beside which we had encamped, we travelled on further towards the south-east, crossing gentle, grassy hills, above which bosses of rock and small ridges of gravel projected here and there. The river, which, when seen from a distance, had appeared rather insignificant, now began, as we gradually approached it, to assume the appearance of an important stream. Its *thalweg* grew more accentuated and narrow, though not so narrow but that we were able to ride without hindrance along the sloping ground on its right and at a considerable height above the stream, which makes several sharp turns. Here we crossed over a series of low passes and saddles. The rain still continued to pour down in sheets, and the ground was as soft and boggy as a morass. The surface was dotted over with the burrows of marmots. The water, which was everywhere flowing in a single channel, was a very muddy grey; I computed its volume to be about 20 cub.m. in the second. Hard rock cropped out on the outer side of the sharp bends. At the last pass that we crossed over the rock was a grey-green sandstone dipping 48° towards the S. 40° W.

By crossing over this last we passed out of the valley of the Gartschi-sängi and soon lost sight of the river; that is to say, it disappeared in the rain towards the south-east, or possibly towards the east-south-east, and emptied itself into the principal river, which was near at hand. We now came out into an almost perfectly level country; namely another flat longitudinal valley, soppy to a degree owing to the persistent downpour. Upon reaching the top of some low grassy hills, where there were numerous traces of encampments, we perceived what we at the first glance took to be a lake; it was a broad expanse of water, the opposite side of which we were unable to see because of the pouring rain. But it soon revealed itself as a gigantic river. The track ran straight down to the water's edge. The stream, flowing westwards, was thick and of a yellowish grey colour. This was the Satschu-tsangpo, one of the biggest rivers in the interior of Tibet. Farther west it falls into the salt lake of Selling-tso, where later on we struck it again at the point where it enters the lake. The river was now swollen in consequence of the heavy downpour which had been going on steadily for some days past. But if we desired to continue our journey towards the south-west, there was no alternative except to ride across the stream; there was no other road.