

terraces on the left to the river. The right escarpment is on the other hand so precipitous and high, that it would be impossible to ascend it, were it not riven by a side-glen, Jaka-tschap, which is likewise contained between precipitous gravel-and-shingle terraces, so that it resembles a miniature cañon. At length the relative altitudes decreased and we entered upon open ground, a steppe with good grazing, traversed by some eroded watercourses, such as Haschäklik or Su-ullugh-tschap and Togh-tschap. On the banks of the latter stand a couple of small villages or homesteads, which cultivate wheat. On the left we passed some smaller detached groups of mountains, as well as the road to Atschan. We pitched camp at the spot where the brook of Dalai-kurghan issues from the mountains, the altitude being 3311 m., so that since leaving Kapa we had already climbed up 800 m.



Fig. 394. THE OUTLET OF THE VALLEY OF DALAI-KURGHAN LOOKING SOUTH.

On the occasion of my visit there were 18 ujlik of Taghliks or Mountaineers, in charge of 6000 sheep. Most of them live in earth-caves (*sovugh*), though they also possess small huts of stone and timber. On the other hand they do not use cottages built entirely of stone, owing to their fear of earthquakes. In Kapa, where earthquakes are never experienced, the people live wholly in stone cottages. The road from Dalai-kurghan to Atschan crosses over the Kara-muran, the transverse glen of which is altogether impassable, for not only is it narrow and choked with stones, but at that season of the year it carried a considerable flood. The village of Atschan was said to consist of 25 ujlik, and there, as also in the villages immediately to the east — Ghudatsche, Isängän, Ak-jar, and Kuramlak (Korumluk) — wheat is grown; although the people live for the most part by sheep-breeding.

The brook of Dalai-kurghan, which lower down irrigates the corn-fields, is fed by springs, and consequently never dries up entirely. On the other hand the village of Togh-baj is dependent upon rain, and if that fails to arrive, the harvest is lost. The surface of the ground begins to freeze in the end of August, and for almost half the year it is said to remain frozen to a depth of 1½ m. The snow is reported to accumulate to a depth of 40 cm., and the Taghliks are then said to drive