

north and much better preserved; by the latter canal Sulaiman Shāh, a Khushwaqt ruler of Yāsīn and Gilgit at the beginning of the nineteenth century,⁴ had endeavoured to bring water once more to Dasht-i-taus. This enterprise of reclamation is supposed to have been abandoned when the rule of that energetic but unscrupulous prince came to a violent end. That the occupation of the Dasht-i-taus belongs to an earlier period is proved by the remains of a large walled enclosure called Bahri-khān (Pl. 1), situated about two miles above the northern end of Yāsīn and opposite to Ghujalti village on the left bank (Fig. 38). Tradition connects it with a Chinese or 'Kalmak' invasion, possibly the same that I have had occasion to discuss before in connexion with the Chinese record of Khush-āmad's reign about the middle of the eighteenth century.⁵ The enclosing walls, built of large water-worn stones from the river-bed below and fully five feet in thickness, form an irregular pentagon of which the three best-preserved faces measure about 264, 273 and 153 feet respectively. Their present height nowhere exceeds four or five feet, and the remains of large quarters traceable near the centre of the enclosure are even more decayed. Apart from debris of hard dark-grey pottery within the ruined fort, I could trace no signs of prolonged occupation. But there can be no doubt that if the old canal were restored, or even if that of Sulaiman Shāh were completed, the amount of arable land, and with it the population, in the Yāsīn valley could be greatly increased.

March to
Hondur.

Continuing our march up the valley we followed the line of Sulaiman Shāh's canal for nearly four miles before crossing the mouth of a large river that descends the Tui valley. Through this leads an important summer route, by which the upper Yārkhun valley can be reached on the Mastūj side across the high Tui pass. Beyond the junction the main valley, known from this point upwards as Warshigūm, affords room for a succession of picturesque villages with rich fields and orchards, extending almost without interruption up to Hondur. They are comprised in the subdivision of Salgām that forms at the present day the best-populated tract of Yāsīn. Passing the large fort of Mīr Wālī, called after Pakhtūn Wālī's father, Hayward's murderer, I visited at Barkulti the fine but much-neglected house of the local 'Hākim' (Fig. 45). The style and abundance of the excellent wood-carving in its large halls recalled what I had seen in Hākim Obaidullah's house at Mīragrām on the Mastūj side.⁶ It was unfortunately too late in the day to take any photographs of the interesting interior. The house was said to have been built some five generations ago. A photograph (Fig. 42) taken at Hondur, where we halted for the night, may show how closely the fine physical appearance of the people of Warshigūm resembles that of their neighbours in Chitrāl and Mastūj. Notwithstanding their Burishaskī speech, wholly distinct from either the Dardic or the Iranian language group, the 'Burish' whom I saw seemed to exhibit all the physical features characteristic of the pure *Homo Alpinus* type.

Village of
Darkōt.

From above Hondur cultivation becomes intermittent, as the valley northward narrows. But in spite of the stupendous rock walls rising on either side progress along its bottom remains quite easy right up to the village of Darkōt, a distance of nearly twelve miles. Here, at an elevation of over 9,000 feet, the head of the valley opens out into a huge amphitheatre, forming a wide grass and jungle covered flat flanked on its sides by mighty ice-clad spurs. The streams issuing from the glaciers which fill the side valleys between these spurs unite close to Darkōt to form the river of Yāsīn. The plain extending around their junction abounds in grazing and fuel, and seems as if created by nature as a resting-place for a force of invaders from the north, such as Kao Hsien-chih had successfully led across the Darkōt pass. It struck me as a significant indication of the vicinity of the uppermost Oxus valley that one of the headmen of Darkōt was an immigrant from

⁴ Cf. Biddulph, *Hindu Koosh*, pp. 137, 153 sq.

⁵ Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 33; above, p. 38.

⁶ Cf. *Serindia*, i. pp. 49 sq.