

and across the Khora-bohrt pass (about 15,000 feet) to the Afghān Pāmīrs. Even then it is far from easy.

The geographical features just briefly indicated fully account for an interesting ethnographic observation made on my passage through the high valleys on either side of the Karambār saddle. They comprise extensive summer grazing grounds which on the west reach from below Barōghil-yailak close up to the saddle and to the east of it descend to below Shuiyenj, a total distance of well over 30 miles. I found these occupied exclusively by Wakhīs who annually come up with their flocks from Afghān territory on the Āb-i-Panja. Several considerable summer villages or 'Yailaks' are inhabited for four or five months in the year by such Wakhīs, who also cultivate land about Sarhad. These settlements are of old date, and clearly prove that notwithstanding the natural boundary formed by the Oxus-Indus watershed to the north and the political frontier between Indian and Afghān territory which follows the same line, the valleys at the head of the Yārkhun and Karambār rivers must ethnographically be considered as forming part of Wakhān. I may incidentally note that the attitude of the Wakhīs we met seemed to reflect full consciousness of this fact. We have here another illustration of what has been rightly observed in the alpine regions of Europe and elsewhere, viz. that difficult river gorges are often of greater importance as ethnographic boundaries, and as military barriers also, than the crest-lines of adjoining high ranges.³

Wakhīs grazing on Yārkhun and Karambār rivers.

The long march that on August 30 took us from the foot of the Barōghil saddle to Murgach, close under the Karambār pass, led throughout over easy ground distinctly Pāmīr-like in character (Fig. 50). Between Chikmar-robāt and the point where we struck the route leading up from Showarshur to the Shawitakh I noticed abundant signs of former glacier action in the form of ancient moraines and cirques. It was interesting to note in the midst of them an old watch-tower built by Wakhīs as a place of defence against Kirghiz raiders, who used to attack these grazing grounds from the side of the Little Pāmīr by crossing the Khora-bohrt and the Karambār passes. On ascending to the latter next morning (Fig. 49) I was able to examine more closely the interesting instance of bifurcation by which the glacier to the south of the pass, and almost astride of it, discharges its drainage partly towards the Yārkhun river, itself a feeder of the Kābul river, and partly into the Zhoesar lake forming the head of the Karambār river and thus draining into the Indus. The photographic panorama (Fig. 47) illustrates the configuration of the ground to the south and on either side of the pass. The latter is represented by an almost imperceptible watershed between old moraines of the glacier; our barometrical observations indicated for it an elevation of approximately 14,420 feet (against 14,060 feet of the map). The eastern branch of the glacier was found much reduced and manifestly in actual course of retrogression. But a small stream issuing from its snout still helps to feed the lake from which the Karambār river takes its rise (Fig. 56). It is significant

Ascent to Karambār pass.

Glacier bifurcation on Karambār pass.

³ Cf. my remarks concerning the separation in political and linguistic respects of the Zēbak-Ishkāshm tract from the rest of the Upper Oxus (Āb-i-Panja) valley, in the introduction to Sir George Grierson's *Ishkāshmī, Zēbakī, and Yāzghulāmī*, p. 4.

Somewhat similar conditions may be observed in the northern portion of Hunza territory, appropriately called 'Little Guhjāl', i. e. 'Little Wakhān'. It is separated from Hunza proper by the extremely difficult river gorges below Ghulmit (cf. *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 44 sqq.), and its population consists almost exclusively of Wakhī immigrants from beyond the high watershed range to the north.

Here it may conveniently be noted that during recent

times this Wakhī immigration across the main Hindukush watershed has extended even farther down the Karambār valley. Small Wakhī settlements composed mainly of refugee followers of the 'Alī Mardān Shāh, the former ruler of Wakhān, are now to be found from Bohrt to Imīt, below the difficult gorges of the Karambār river to which reference has been made in the text above. These ethnographic changes of modern date are of interest as indications of a progressive infiltration of an Iranian-speaking element to the south of the Hindukush. The same is observable also in the Lutkhō tract of Chitrāl, south of the Dōrāh pass, where Yidghāh, a Galcha dialect, is spoken by old immigrants from Munjān; cf. *Serindia*, i. pp. 26 sq.