

3,000 between Kara-muk and Gharm seemed scarcely exaggerated. Yet there was evidence, especially along the upper portion of the valley, that agricultural effort was here far from being equal to the extent of arable land.

Turkish  
occupation  
of Kara-  
tegīn.

It was easy to trace the cause of this in what I observed with regard to the ethnic character of the people. According to local tradition the whole of Kara-tegīn down to Gharm was occupied until some two centuries ago by Kirghiz, while now their holdings stop at Kala-i-lab-i-āb and give place to settlements of Persian-speaking Tājiks. Kara-tegīn, as its present designation and the prevailing local names attest, appears to have been long occupied by a Turkī-speaking population, the Kirghiz probably representing the last wave of this Turkish invasion into what was originally Iranian ground. It was hence of special interest to observe how the Kirghiz settlers were now being slowly ousted again from the land by the steady reflux of Tājik immigrants from Darwāz, the Zarafshān valley, and other tracts farther west.

Kirghiz  
ousted by  
Tājiks.

The Kirghiz, who invariably still observe their customary semi-nomadic migration to summer grazing grounds, are obviously unable to extract from their land as much produce as their industrious Tājik neighbours. The latter accordingly find opportunity to buy up more and more of the holdings, while the Kirghiz owners, with their stock of cattle increased by profit on land sales, are tempted to emigrate to the Alai and the steppes farther north, where full scope is offered for life in accordance with their traditional instincts. The process of peaceful reconquest here observed is not without its historical interest; for it helps us to understand better how the original Iranian population of ancient Sogdiana has managed also in the plains and lower hills to regain a prevalent share in the land that had been wrested from it again and again by nomadic invaders.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the practice of Kirghiz intermarriage with Tājik females, of which I learnt on my passage through Kara-tegīn, served to illustrate another potent process, that by which the autochthonous Iranian population has gradually succeeded in so markedly transforming the racial character of its Turkish conquerors, when not altogether absorbing them.

Trade  
passing  
through  
Gharm.

Passing Langar-i-shāh, once the chief place on the left bank of the river, and other large villages ensconced in fine arbours and orchards (Fig. 437) I reached on October 10th Gharm, the seat of the 'Mīr' then administering Kara-tegīn for the Government of the Amīr of Bokhāra. The kind welcome accorded to me there during a day's halt in the 'Dādkhwāh's' large garden afforded interesting glimpses of the quaint medieval style of official pomp and circumstance then still surviving in these quiet backwaters of Western Turkestan. It also allowed me to gather useful information about that regular trade, largely in horses, sheep, and wool, from Kulāb, Baljuwān, Hissār, and other tracts north of the Oxus towards Kōkand and Margilān, for which Kara-tegīn still serves as the main line of passage. The route followed by this trade leads above Gharm up the right side of the valley, and it is at Gharm that the two lines of communication coming from Hissār in the south-west and the region between the terminal course of the Surkh-āb (Wakhsh-āb) in the south and the Oxus unite. It hence appears probable that Gharm has from early times always been a place of importance in Kara-tegīn.

Along  
Surkh-āb  
to Āb-i-  
garm.

From below the junction of the Surkh-āb and Khingāb the valley greatly contracts, and within two marches from Gharm it ceases for a considerable distance to be practicable for trade traffic. The numerous villages that we passed on October 12-13th on our way to Āb-i-garm lay mostly in fertile side valleys or else on plateaus well above the right bank of the Surkh-āb. Before finally leaving the main valley towards the close of the second march we enjoyed a striking view from

<sup>2</sup> In Kara-tegīn this process appears to have been distinctly favoured by its old 'Shāhs' and the Darwāz rulers who succeeded them. Though themselves of non-Iranian

stock, they found it easier to practise their exactions on meek Tājiks than on Kirghiz and Özbek subjects not altogether wedded to their shares of the soil.