

CHAPTER VII.

ACROSS THE VAKJIR PASS TO CHAKMAKTIN-KUL.

Having visited five of the high valleys at the southern edge of *Taghdumbash Pamir* and climbed three passes, I left this region and continued my journey westwards to the *Vakjir Pass* and *Chakmaktin-kul*.

On August 11th we travelled 25 km. N. W. and west, descending from 4,133 m. to 3,628 m., or 505 m., a rate of 1:49.5. We again passed *Masar* with its Kirgiz *aul* of 10 tents of the Kesek tribe, though a few Kara-teit and Chal-teit also were said to live here. Some of them pass the winter at *Uruk* on the *Raskan-darya*, watching yaks. The shepherds and their sheep pass the winter at *Masar*, as the animals cannot be taken across the *Ilik-su Pass*. Even if they could make the journey they would be torn in the bushes and *jangal* on its eastern side.

At *Masar* we crossed the *Hunserab* which here was 40 m. broad and half a meter deep and of a moderate velocity. The water was quite clear and bluish green. Then we ascended the 50 m. high left erosion terrace, the surface of which was undulated and consisted of gravel and meadows watered by small rills from the south. From *Sasik-teke* a brook comes down.

Having marched a few kilometers between the southern mountains and some small detached hills, we entered the mighty valley of the upper *Taghdumbash*. Just in the corner where the river turns to the north a mighty mountain group is visible during a very long part of the march. From the southern mountains a little narrow valley comes out; it has eternal snow in its background and perhaps some little glacier, as its name is *Mus-jilga*. A similar valley opposite it is called *Koshin-ghir*, or as others would have it, *Kashik-unkur*. Both have grass and brooks in their lower parts, but no roads. At the next brook we camped at a place called *At-yeilak* (pronounced *At-yeilan*). Our Kirgizes said that the mountains south of the *Vakjir Pass* were called *Mus-tagh*; the name *Hindu-kush* they had not heard.

On August 12th our road proceeded W. S. W. 18.6 km. on the right or southern bank of the *Taghdumbash River*. The next camp being at 3,855 m., the rise is 227 m. and the rate 1:82.