

is called *Kichik-khan-yoli*. Lower down, near the camp, are two other valleys from the south, *Khan-yoli* and *Ak-chirak*. All three are said to lead to passes by which there are roads to *Ak-tash*. This seems to be correct, for on the English map there is a valley called *Khan-yoli* south of the same range.

We camped at *Keng-shevär* near a *karaul* of 8 Tajik guards and 2 Chinese soldiers. During the winter this *karaul* moves lower down to the N. E. in the valley as the snow makes it impossible to find grazing or fuel. The snow is usually 2 feet deep. Sometimes the pass is closed by snow, and numbers of horses get lost on it. One or two months in the winter it is not used. Instead of it one takes the *Berdesh* or *Berdesht* road to *Tagharma*. There is a good deal of traffic, as Afghans, Badakshanis and Vakhanliks take this road. Here, as at so many other places, S. W. wind was said to blow in winter. Sometimes the snow is blown away from the pass by hard winds, but usually the snow is covered with a hard frozen crust.

On September 15th our road proceeds N. N. E. and N. E. for 30 km. to *Tash-kurgan* where the altitude is 3,152 m. We therefore descend no less than 836 m., or at a rate of 1:35.9. The *Lakshak-bel* is thus 1,493 m. above *Tash-kurgan*.

In the morning the whole country was snowed over. Not far below *Keng-shevär* the valley becomes gravelly and the road uncomfortable. This place is called *Kara-korumning-bashi* or »the Beginning of the Black Gravel«. At the left side the rock is gneiss in 40° N. 30° E. At *Kara-korum* one has to cross a scree of gravel and blocks. Opposite, at the left side, is the little tributary of *Girde-kul*. Between both, the brook has cut its furrow very deep. The valley is deep and narrow and sometimes has erosion terraces. The brook carries about 1 cub. m. per second of water but gradually grows larger. The water is clear as crystal. There are heaps of gneiss blocks of all varieties; fine-striped green, coarse-striped grey, etc. At *Yar-utek* from the left we again cross a scree. The gneiss is then striped in white and black. Pegmatite is common. Then granite appears, generally reddish and falling steeply to the north.

Here the rocks are nearly perpendicular at both sides and only a narrow gorge is left between them when fresh fallen blocks are numerous after the earthquake. The passage is disagreeable, as one often has to ride under overhanging blocks which may come down at any moment. Constantly we cross the brook that meanders between the blocks. Finally the valley opens. At its left side the granite had a fall of 55° S. 55° E. It was white with small black crystals.

Now we see the *Tash-kurgan* valley in front of us; broad and mighty. In the distance the fortress is visible. Leaving the *Shinde* valley behind us we still follow its brook, which by and by divides into several branches and into ariks or irrigation canals going to the fields of wheat, barley, etc., between which the road runs. We camped near the fort on the top of the left erosion terrace.