

tinually lost their footing and almost fell. Once, as we were leading the animals among the boulders at the foot of an almost perpendicular cliff, my horse slipped and fell into the river, knocking me in with him. I seized a big stone and pulled myself out of the swift current, with no mishap beyond a wet note-book and a ruined aneroid. The horse could not land on our side of the river, and had to swim across. It took half an hour to catch him, which greatly disturbed the guide. The road down the Sanju gorge is so difficult that, except when the stream is frozen, caravans follow a circuitous route down the next valley to the east, crossing one of the many "topa," or "earth" passes characteristic of the loess-covered mountain slope. The majority of the valleys leading from the plateaus to the basin floor are even more impassable. Hence the roads from the upper to the lower zones are all difficult, and the consequent rarity of communication accentuates the tendency to diverse development in the plateaus and in the lower zones.

At an elevation of about 8000 feet the Sanju valley broadens, and we there emerged upon a low terrace of loess lying upon gravel, and covered with waving fields of green wheat and barley. The verdure was delightful after the shades of gray, brown, red, and yellow which had wearied us among the barren mountains. At the hamlet of Ulachi, a ragged peasant in a short quilted gown and fur cap made us welcome. The best he could offer us was a place in the large dusky living-room of his flat-roofed mud house. Standing on the ground outside, one could easily look over the roof, but inside, one stepped downward and found that the room had a height of fully six feet. When my eyes had