

ited, they furnish their own peculiar evidence of desiccation. I saw traces of ancient habitation at Pochinza, near Kuzzil Singer, and at Kumush, a little farther north, but they were too small to be conclusive. At Chukur, north of Bagrash Kul, we passed some ruins, and the people said that there are traces of old canals which indicate that centuries ago the fields were two or three times as large as those which can be cultivated to-day. Similarly at Ushak Tal, in the same vicinity, I found that the main ruins of an old Buddhist village lie four or five miles below the centre of the modern town, at a point to which the present stream will not run at all in dry winters, and only in a very small volume during dry summers.

For Kuruk Tagh and Chol Tagh as a whole I cannot do better than quote from Abdur Rehim, the guide of Kuzzil Singer. My own limited observations agreed entirely with his. Abdur Rehim was a tall, lank hunter, who for the forty years of his life had lived in the desert, far from all neighbors except his brothers. He knew every mountain, plain, and spring within a hundred miles of his home, and every spot where a little vegetation flourishes, or rather perishes, in a damp spot surrounded by salt. His lonely life, and his long, hard journeys after game, had given to him, as to his brothers, a degree of energy and self-reliance which I have never seen equaled in Central Asia. And more than this, he was a man who, though he talked but little, thought deeply.

"In old times, were the springs larger or smaller than now, or were they just the same?" I asked him one day.

"Larger," he answered without hesitation; and when I