

much, if you want your horses to be worth anything. To-morrow I am giving the horses and men a day's rest and will move on to Kashgar in short marches.

The road runs mainly in an ESE direction from Uksalur and for about a dozen miles it goes along a corridor between the mountains in the amazing curves the water has made during centuries of undermining the soil. The walls of the gorges are at times perpendicular, at others slightly sloping. The corridor, which seldom allows us to ride otherwise than in Indian file, is so narrow in places that a horse cannot set down two feet next to each other. The ascents and descents are so steep at times that it is only thanks to the steps in the rocks already referred to that it is possible to move up or down. If you come across a fairly wide gorge, you see from a distance what strange shapes the waterworn rock has taken on. One mountain side may be full of small hollows widened by storms, another so worn that in places you can see daylight through the wall of rock. In other places it remains untouched in the most astonishing folds. At a distance it looks like a gigantic cloth of the colours characteristic of Kirghiz carpets that has been thrown on the ground and has fallen into these folds. The colours are beautiful, red preponderating in a pronounced, though not garish shade. There is also much green. The layers are horizontal or slanting, as if one side of the mountain had been raised by subterranean forces. The road consists of clay or sand mixed with large stones and gravel, at times, for long stretches, it is like a veritable quarry with enormous blocks of stone scattered in all directions. No trace of animal or vegetable life except beasts of burden that have dropped in their tracks and been abandoned to their fate. The impression is often grand, but desolate, as though you were riding through ruins upon ruins. — Having ridden about 27 miles we found that the defile debouched into a very long valley, 1 1/2—2 miles wide. After covering another 5 miles we discovered some Kirghiz who, as usual, willingly placed kikitkas at our disposal and an hour later the caravan arrived after climbing and struggling uninterruptedly for 11 hours.

*August 28th.* As I had decided to do, I have remained here to give my horses a rest. — To replace the yigit whom I had hired in Osh the day before we left and who has proved unsatisfactory, I have engaged one of our caravan leaders, a so-called »qarakesh». For 30 roubles a month in wages (the former man had 20) he has undertaken the duties of a yigit. His age is about 40, but he is strong and experienced. I believe this is well worth the extra 10 roubles and I must have capable men in order to find more time for my own work.

*August 29th.* The rest yesterday has done my horses a lot of good. I have been able to exchange the one with a galled leg for another, a couple of years older and of inferior breed, but at any rate able to work at once. The transaction cost me 5 roubles. Thus I have only one horse with a serious saddle-gall. If I can cure it, all will be well.

The journey to-day was in a SE direction down the Qizil-ui valley. The river bed here, at all events at this season, is practically devoid of water, though otherwise the ground is marshy in places with small patches of standing water. Some rain in the night had made the ground wet and at times the horses sank deep into the marshy clay soil. About