

be possible to negotiate them on wheels without any preparatory work. From this place a long rising slope took us to a broad mountain pass, Kochkaushi dawan, beyond which we travelled for a considerable time at about the same level until we descended into a narrow valley, at the bottom of which, judging by its name of Kumushluk jilga, a river forms at times. The road follows the innumerable twists of the valley for half-an-hour and then climbs a steep slope which would require some digging before it could be driven along, though this would be comparatively easy in the loose sand. The top of the eminence is called Kumushluk jilga dawan, although it can scarcely be called a pass. After a slow descent to the NW we reached a dry and narrow river bed, Kitas-tash jilga, that crossed our road. On the opposite bank we found ourselves on a large plateau-like plain on which the same constantly recurring bushy plant grew. The road goes on uninterruptedly until it is again intersected by two parallel river beds, divided by a very narrow and long sandy eminence. The first, Kambes jilga, like all those I have mentioned (except the Chong darya), is dry and holds the water after heavy rain for a couple of days at most. The other, Kumushashkösh jilga, was only formed recently (according to what I was told) last year and obtains its water, which is salt, from mountains close by (less than 1 paotai). The banks are so steep here that they might require some work. From this place we went on through this sandy desert with a couple of men from the village of Puski, who met us with hot tea. A ride of another half-hour across the same fairly level plain and then a breakneck climb up the steeply sloping bank of the river Zanguai aq or Puski darya, as it is called here. In about another mile along the bank of the river we reached a house, where a crowd of common people had collected to get a sight of the sahib.

As soon as the road leaves Puski it goes for about half-an-hour up a fairly steep slope till it reaches a mountain pass, Gazbash dawan. During the ascent the road is so narrow in places that some points of rocks projecting out of the ground would have to be blasted to make it passable for wheeled traffic. From Gazbash dawan it proceeds WNW, only descending slightly, until it comes to the edge of an oasis bearing the name of the river Sandju, along the banks of which it extends. From the high plain you get an excellent view of the long and narrow oasis, the fields of which, cut up into small squares, and numerous trees must afford a welcome relief, especially in the summer, from the surrounding sandhills. Sandju is an oasis of about 1000 houses distributed among the following villages from east to west: Dombak 150, Baskak 300, Khanaga 200, Saidulla 100 and Sawu 250. On the average about 20 mou can be calculated per house, but as regards fertility the soil is very varied. The best soil yields, on an average, up to 20 tcheraks of crop for 2 tcheraks of seed, the worst only 5—6. In some places the soil contains much salt. Only grain is grown and it is consumed locally. The population does not seem to be very prosperous, for on an average it does not appear to have more than $1\frac{1}{4}$ horse, $3\frac{1}{4}$ cow and $3\frac{1}{4}$ donkey per house. Its only wealth is sheep, of which there are about 25 to a house, though, of course, very unevenly divided. The principal source of income is wool, which is either sold as a raw material or is turned into felt, the only industry pursued by the indolent population. We rode through the villages of Dombak-Saidulla, Khanaga

*December 16th.
Sulgahiz
langar.*