

leads NNW throughout, the first half passing through tilled land with, considering the local conditions, a large number of houses scattered round the fields, the latter part through waste sandfields. We passed through three small villages, Bash langar, Toghraq Küprük and Hasan Boghra Khan, which are almost connected with each other by a number of scattered single houses. The sandy soil between the two latter is as thickly strewn with boulders as a river bed, though the features of the landscape do not suggest that water was present here formerly. Beyond the last village we entered hilly, sandy ground without a sign of water or a trace of cultivation. The ground displays at times large undulations, at others hillocks, sometimes in the shape of large pyramids, and again fairly high hills, though always of soft outline without any precipices or sharp lines. The desolate sandy landscape is fatiguing and it is with a feeling of real satisfaction that, just as suddenly as on the previous days, you see, on gaining an unexpected declivity, the grey mud houses of a densely inhabited kishlak of appreciable size with its trees, plots of field and mud walls. How one longs to put some paint on them to enliven this hopeless grey tone that seems to be all-pervading in Central Asia! Bora is a poor village with scanty fields. Owing to the shortage of water only half of the field area is tilled. There are only a few cattle per house, 1/10 horse, 1/4 cow, 1/3 ass and 1 1/2 sheep. There is no handicraft except for domestic purposes. My host's neighbour has 1 mou of field and a family of 5 children to support.

Having ridden for half-an-hour through the tilled fields of Bora you enter a sandy plain that seems endless. The hills that frame Bora on the east and west, disappear very soon. First, the western hills leave the road and soon after the eastern ones, which have been growing smaller, seem to melt into the hazy horizon. The day was cloudy and cold. The yigit and Rakhimjanoff frequently walked part of the way in order to keep warm. For hours you see nothing but sand — except horsemen appearing on the horizon from time to time like ships at sea. After a ride of over three hours the sand suddenly gives way to coarse gravel and boulders, though there is no change in the level of the ground to be noticed. At a distance of about a mile and a half, a sort of bank became distinguishable through the mist — the outlines of the village of Frok. Its 150 houses cover a long, narrow strip of land between the band of gravel referred to, about a mile and a third wide, called Tchakandelik aqsu, and a much narrower one known as Siyak üstang. Round the latter dry river bed, or rather along it, lies the village of Siyak with 300 houses, also very scattered along its length, i.e., approximately from S to N, and separated from the village of Bash-urang with its 300 houses by a third dry river bed, Bash-urang üstang, covered with gravel, which is also almost level with the rest of the land. All these three dry river beds are arms of the same river, the sources of which lie higher to the south in the region of Zunglang. When rain falls in the mountains, they contain water for 5—10 days at a time. These rainy periods occur 4 or 5 times during the hot season. The villages are poor, the fields lean and the water insufficient. The Bash-urang fields were succeeded by a sandy plain, but in 3/4 of an hour we reached the edge of the oasis of Karghalik. A modest little river, the Topoge su, now practically dry, flows along it. At the point where the road crosses it, there is a

*December 19th.
Karghalik.*