

drivers warmed themselves round the fires there, they are evidently used a great deal as stopping places. The traffic on the road was not large to-day. We only met carts with wood or charcoal, almost all drawn by oxen, some of them of a good shape and with fine heads, but not large.

Having ridden for about 4 1/2 hours, we reached a little village, Lung-kou, containing a couple of houses and lying on the river Yangi darya, a tributary of the Qizil Su. This village is a regular stopping place for caravans, and the principal occupation of the inhabitants is to cook food and bake bread for travellers. Here the plain is sparsely overgrown with a poor kind of tree, often bush-like and no higher than a man on horseback. Two paotai further we reached our goal for the day, a couple of poor houses bearing the name of Qara Yulghun. The Qara Yulghun darya or Kun darya, also a tributary of the Qizil Su, flows past them. There was no maize to be bought, nor any horse available to fetch some from Lung-kou. Luckily, we were able to buy the most necessary fodder from a passing caravan.

At 1 p.m. snow began to fall again, dropping like an impenetrable white veil between me and the beautiful mountains in the N, the indistinct outlines of which I had been able to trace despite the hazy atmosphere.

Yesterday I rode with Rakhimjanoff, Ljo and a local hunter across the plain *February 4th.* that is sparsely covered with poor trees and bushes. Our hopes of bagging one of the *Ordeklik* »kiyik» (wild goat) that are said to be plentiful here, were frustrated. The snow of the *village.* last few days, heavy for these parts, had, according to our huntsman, driven the »kiyik» into the mountains. The plain is quite desolate and without water. The range of mountains in the north, which still accompanied us to-day, and the mounds of earth and hillocks, relieved the monotony slightly. The vegetation was poor. Small trees, arrested in their growth, bushes and a bushy kind of grass were about all there was to see. Plenty of dry »toghraq» fuel and here and there an old low tree-trunk of larger size indicated, however, that at some time the vegetation had been better than it was now. After a vain search of a few hours we returned to the road at one of the 2 or 3 langars that are the only refuge of the caravans between Qara Yulghun and Ordeklik. A couple of ramshackle houses without a strip of field, inhabited by a couple of families that supply bread, flour etc. to passing travellers, form the picture of the anything but inviting langar.

The road is good and easy for traffic, at any rate during the cold season. In some places the sand is rather heavy, but on the whole firm. Very little traffic to-day, only a few arbahs with wood and charcoal going westward.

Wild boar are plentiful in this district, and if the population had the faintest idea of how beaters should function, our 7 hours' hunt would have produced more than a solitary boar. Among the thick reeds of the Qara aq, flowing from the Qizil Su, we sighted several, but instead of trying to drive them towards the guns, the men did all they could to make them run away from us. It was only towards the end of the hunt that we could get them to understand that instead of running in all directions, hallooing and shouting, they should spread out in line and advance towards us. A few days here would certainly