



*Pounding grain in a  
hollowed out tree-trunk in  
the village of Qara Kichin  
near Maral Bashi.*

had obviously flowed formerly. Large trees grew in its bed now. About an hour later the hillocks gradually grew smaller and the larger trees disappeared with them, only to appear again an hour later on almost level ground, densely covered with dry »toghraq» waste, roots, branches etc. that made it rather heavy going for the horses. Here again we crossed what was obviously an old river bed in the direction NW—SE. According to our guide it was called »Kun darya» and carried the water from the Qizil Su centuries ago. We followed a couple of kiyiks for a few miles, having surprised them by our sudden appearance, but as the tracks seemed to lead straight to the mountains, about 3—4 paotai distant, and the ground was too trying for the horses, we gave up the chase. There were numerous tracks of wild boar, wherever the »jantagh» grass grew on the hillocks. Here, too, the ground was so heavy for long stretches that our horses sank deep into it. The local people call these places »sjor» and assert that the soil here is very saliferous.

The morning was very chilly, but it cleared up in the afternoon and was quite warm. The mountains to the north were uncommonly clearly visible to-day and formed a very fine background to the ugly and monotonous landscape.

In front, i.e., north of the village of Qara Kichin, there is a bog which the arbahs avoid by going off the road and making a détour. There is a Government sarai in the village with a large yard. The one I stayed at was bad. In general the sarais on this side of Faizabad are more than unpretentious. At first sight this seems strange, for this is the main route of all the numerous mandarins of Kashgaria. On second thoughts, however, and considering the preparations that are made for the arrival of a mandarin, you realise that even a hovel filled with carpets and rugs may be comparatively comfortable and that a mandarin requires a good sarai less than anyone. For a »sahib», too, a fuss is made, and if you have some rugs of your own you are all right. These loose rugs fill the air with wisps of hair that get into your mouth, your food, your pen, when you start writing, in a word everywhere where you do not want them.