

going W, joined the river from the E. On either side of these dry river beds, 4—5 hours' ride from the town, lie two villages, Tosma with 15 Kirghiz and 3 Sart farms, and Tagh Tumshuk with about 60 farms inhabited by Sarts. Of these you can only see a couple of houses, the others creeping up the gorge. Half-an-hour later we reached the village of the Bashaghma guard containing a garrison of Chinese, 1 Sart and 1 Kirghiz. About 30 farms inhabited by the Kuchi Kirghiz tribe are grouped round it. The Kirghiz, who go in for agriculture, are quite like the Sarts in their manner of living. They live in similar houses and use the same agricultural implements. Still, they show a certain predilection for cattle-farming, for they always have a larger number of cattle than the Sarts. This may be due, however, to their fields usually being in remote districts, at the foot of a mountain, where there is pasture. Many of these wealthier settled Kirghiz spend the summer in their kibitkas in the mountains and only return at harvest time.

The Qara Teke mountains form a curve that encloses the little valley of the Bashaghma guard on three sides. From this place we reached the steeply sloping northern bank of the Taushqan darya in half-an-hour. The Qara Teke chain continues in a SW direction. In front of us to the N lay an enormous mountain range of the Tian Shan mountains. It seemed to extend from W to E, but was at least 7 or 8 miles distant. In this mountain range, to the W from my starting point, rises the decorative, snow-capped summit of Aqbel. The road from the Bedel pass must debouch about there. The river flows here in 3 arms, covered with ice at present, of which the middle one is the largest and measures about 6, the southern one 4 and the northern one 3 fathoms in width. The bed of the river is stony and covered with gravel, though there are no stones of any great size. At high-water an area of barely  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile in breadth is under water here. In the water channels the depth is then about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres, at normal times the depth does not exceed 1 metre. The river is generally swift; during the spring floods from the middle of May to the beginning or middle of July the water brings down many stones from the mountains. It is then impossible to ford the river on horseback. The bed of the river, typical of the mountain rivers of this country, is broad and flat with almost the same ground level except for some depressions or water channels, not particularly deep. The arms of the river divide at times into numerous small channels, at others they all flow along the same channel and then again form two or three arms. The southern bank forms a long slope with an almost imperceptible drop towards the river. The northern bank, in spite of its far greater width, has a considerably more pronounced drop, especially in the part closer to the mountains. The soil on both, especially on the northern bank, contains much gravel and stones and has no vegetation or only a little grass growing in tufts. The northern bank is higher and drops vertically from a height of about 3 fathoms here to the river bed. The bank is intersected in some places by a crevice extending vertically to the course of the river. The soil is löss everywhere. No trees or houses excepting the few farms of the villagers at the foot of the Qara Teke.

Approximately opposite Ing Tumshuk and Tosma S of the river a poor little village, Kök-jigda, lies on the northern bank with 15 farms and an abandoned old Chinese guard-house. To the W of this the ground forms a number of small terrace-like steps. A line