

where the river flowed in one arm, but it grew wider again and very soon it attained a width of about a mile and later even more. The stony plain gave way to another with a layer of löss at any rate next to the surface. In sections of earth in clefts and along the N bank of the river I noticed various layers of earth. The lowest, at the surface of the ground, contained less stones and gravel. Above it a layer of löss of 3—4 feet and again a layer of the same conglomerate, this time not more than 1—2 feet, and crowning it all a layer of löss occasionally going in mounds or hillocks.

The arms of the river leave the ledge of the northern bank and press against the southern bank. On the space, at first very narrow, between the ledge of the land and the river we found the first houses of the village of Qarabagh partly on the eminence and partly in the bed of the river itself. The arms of the river withdraw as far as a mile and a third. In riding across the fields here, intersected by ariqs, you forget entirely that you are in the bottom of a river bed. Without any perceptible boundary Qarabagh is succeeded by the village of Säkisylik which in turn gives way to Hungrat. The river again crosses to the northern bank, where it flows in a main arm close to the ledge of the bank and in a couple of smaller runnels further off. During the whole of the day's journey the river does not present any serious obstacle. Even in those places, where it flows in a single arm, it can be forded at high-water. As a rule several horsemen combine for this purpose, so that in case of need they can help each other, but a horseman who knows the river can cross by himself. The steep ledge of the northern bank follows the river closely throughout the day. At times it has a drop of 3 or 4 fathoms, but at others it is as much as 7 fathoms above the river. There are many rainwater channels and small arms of the river at short intervals which cut deep clefts in the löss and form a row of paths to the higher ground. Owing to this circumstance and the comparative shallowness of the river, the latter does not form a serious obstacle along the route we have travelled to-day. At the NE end of the village of Qarabagh the river flows in 2 main arms, each 6—8 fathoms wide. Its current is swift. The water comes up to the belly of a local horse. The bed is hard and the banks are accessible.

On the southern bank of the river farms with trees and fields seem to succeed each other without interruption. Chailang and Sugetlik, approximately opposite the northern end of Yamansu, are followed by Dongchik with about 50 houses and Merket with about as many on the level of Qarabagh and finally by Khokholak with 8 houses opposite Säkisylik.

The mountains on our left had gradually withdrawn more and more. They seemed to form a curve far in front of us in the north and continued on a larger scale with snow-capped summits to the E or NE. The guide called the chain of mountains Muzart tagh. The villages and houses in the river bed looked poor, the fields were poor and in some places there were deposits of salt on the surface. Some of the dwellings were simply dug into the vertical ledge of the bank. Such a grotto-like dwelling looks anything but inviting with an opening serving as a door, over which the smoke from within has formed a broad black streak. The women wear a cloth as headgear instead of the leather cap that is usual everywhere else. The cloth is mostly red and tied by two ends at the back of the neck, the two other ends hanging loose.