

February 26th.

Sagun village.

flows in 1 or 2 main arms with a pronounced predilection for the southern bank. Everywhere the river is said to be unfordable at high-water.

At Aral I saw a peculiar farm-waggon or rather cart on low, solid wheels without spokes, made of rough logs of wood or boards. The body of the waggon was a box made of rough boards. The whole thing was clumsy, heavy and did not hold much. — In many places considerable deposits of salt were visible on the surface of the ground.

February 28th.

Qara Döbe and
Yangelmelesse.

From Kichik Aral we rode across to the high southern bank in order to observe the course of the river more easily. We forded the river at a place, where it is divided into two main arms flowing next to each other, one about 20, the other about 17 fathoms wide. Greatest depth 85 cm. Just beyond the river turns sharply to the south, one arm touching the steep southern bank and flowing along its foot for about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles, while the other remains $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile distant. At the end of the village of Aqyar these two arms run into each other and continue for $3\frac{1}{2}$ —4 miles, as far as can be seen from the southern bank, in a channel in an E direction at a distance of $\frac{2}{3}$ — $1\frac{1}{3}$ miles from it. Here you obtain a splendid view of the valley and the flat northern bank. Viewed from a distance the latter now has the same character as the southern bank during the first three days: a flat plain with an uninterrupted row of houses, trees and tilled fields. On the southern side a desolate plain of löss begins at the eastern boundary of Aqyar. Traces of abandoned strips of field with low walls of earth are seen close to the village, but no vegetation. Here and there you see a ravine-like, though not deep, rainwater channel or crack in the ground. A mile or two east of the village and about as far north from the ledge of the bank there are obvious remains of walls in 4 places. One of these ruins measures 30×24 feet and still has fairly high (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 fathoms) remains of a wall; there is little left of the other 3 walls. The building faces N and S and seems to have stood on a slight artificial eminence. Another ruin looks as if it had been a small octagonal tower of unbaked bricks. The four sides of the ruin facing W are in parts quite well preserved, the others have been destroyed by falling bricks that have formed a heap at the foot of the tower. The other two ruins are remains of small houses. In many places there are remains of old clay vessels on the surface of the ground, in a couple of places slag. Everything points to a village, at any rate, having stood here. Unfortunately, my guide, a Yuzbashi from Aqyar, could tell me nothing; from other natives, however, I heard that these ruins are ascribed to the Kalmuks. The plain, on which they stand, is called »saj» like so many similar plains. The ground between the ledge of the bank and the river is white with deposits of sand, and the ground is so porous that the horses break through it almost all the time. A bushy, low plant grows here which the population collects for fuel. The »saj» plain extends eastward for 7 or 8 miles to the foot of a small chain of mountains, Patlama tagh, that takes a SSW—NNE course and the northern point of which reaches the bed of the river. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile before the mountains the ledge of the bank disappears. Before this its height of about 8 fathoms in the village had been reduced to 4. The river flows in two arms in an easterly direction to the foot of the mountains, where they combine into one arm, over 20 fathoms broad, which goes on to the NE. For the