

the Kumbash mazar on the right. The road runs along the edge of the ledge of the bank. The belt of tilled land, about 2 miles in width at first, grows narrower and between the villages of Kumbash and Beshtugemen there is a wedge, formed of grass-covered mounds, of the desert-like area that limits the tilled fields along the river. The soil is so saliferous here that you imagine that you see a covering of snow between the thin blades of grass. The river and the road have in the meantime described a wide curve and instead of SE they now run SSW.

The Beg met me at the beginning of the village of Beshtugemen and offered me the hospitality of his house. He lived in a large house not far from the bank of the river and it was very comfortable there after riding for 7 1/2 hours on a cold and dull day.

Field work was in full swing. Everywhere I saw people ploughing, or rather scraping the surface of the ground with a very primitive wooden plough drawn by a couple of oxen. Wheat, millet and rice were being sown now, maize 30—40 days later. The fields are ploughed here once in the autumn and again once or twice in the spring according to whether the field was sown last summer or not. Manure is necessary. If there is not sufficient available, dry walls, dust from the road, the top layer of spurs of rock etc. are used. The seed ripens so slowly that there is no question of two crops during the same year as in some of the southern districts. Winter wheat occurs, though in small quantities. Fertilised land yields a 5—6 fold crop of wheat, 48 fold of maize and 20—45 fold of rice. There seem to be more cattle than in the southern districts and they look better kept, as do the horses; Maral Bashi is an exception as regards horned cattle.

Beshtugemen is a large village of about 250 houses, or rather five separate villages administered under this common name by 1 Beg and 5 Yuzbashis. Wheat yields a 10 fold, 5 fold and 3 fold crop here in the different categories; maize 30, 20 and 15 fold, rice 15 and flax 16 fold. About 4—5 persons can be reckoned per household, 1 horse, 4 heads of cattle, 2 asses, 12 sheep and 20 mou of land. The calculation is, of course, very approximate.

Early this morning there was a slight buran-like wind which was soon succeeded by some drops of rain. The sky cleared for a time, however, during which we enjoyed wonderful sunshine, but then the clouds closed again and covered the sky for the rest of the day. *March 8th.*
Matan village.

At Beshtugemen the Aqsu darya flows in 3 arms, the one on the south being the largest. During the season of high-water, i.e. for 30—40 days, all connection between the two banks is cut off at this point and is only possible by means of the ferries higher up or lower down. During the rest of the year the river can be forded; even the marshy places visible from the bank present no insuperable obstacle. The depth is said to be no greater than to cover half the saddle of an average horse. There do not seem to be any fixed fords that are generally used. You select as broad a place in the arm of the river as possible and ride across.

After we had ridden for an hour and a quarter through tilled fields the road debouched at Beshtugemen mazar into the river bank which is about 1 1/2 fathoms high here. The river here flows in one great arm. The bed of the river is 1—1 1/3 miles broad between the