

got ashore and rode off pursued by the curses of the ferrymen, for they had not paid a farthing. It is not surprising that under such circumstances the ferrymen have to content themselves with a modest profit of 50 cop. a month.

We spent the night in a more than usually miserable hut. The village consists of five houses built partly of lumps of clay, but otherwise only of sticks and branches with no clay at all or very little. They are only inhabited in the winter by some Qaratalliks, who bring their cattle here and return in the summer to till their plots of field. From the style of building, however, you would sooner take the houses for summer than winter quarters. Some fishing is done here; in two of the huts there were nets reminiscent of our warping-nets. An eagle was chained to a perch in front of one of the huts. A leather cap drawn over both his eyes quells any desire to hunt at an unsuitable time.

March 10th. After a tiring day we were here again for the night. I could not carry out my intention of returning along the southern bank of the Aqsu darya, because I was told that at present there was no possibility of crossing the Yarkand darya except by the ferry that I described yesterday. I could therefore cross to the other side, but could not get back again further south. Besides, I was told that at the place where the Kuna darya again joins the Aqsu darya (slightly E of Matan), it would be impossible to ford either of the rivers, so that I should be forced to stick to the southern bank, not of the Aqsu, but of the Kuna darya. On reflection I decided to keep to the northern bank of the river.

The strong north wind yesterday and the day before had lowered the temperature very considerably, but at daybreak it was almost calm and the sky was clear. In the afternoon it got so warm that I was inclined to throw off my short fur coat.

From our quarters we rode south for about $3/4$ of an hour until we reached the northern bank of the Aqsu darya about $2/3$ of a mile east of its junction with the Yarkand darya. At a distance the Yarkand darya seems to come from the SE, make a sharp bend after being joined by the Aqsu darya and take the easterly direction of the latter. The northern bank of the Aqsu darya consists of rugged and very saliferous ground covered with thorny bushes and a few scattered trees. It was difficult and painful for the horses to move in this »djengal» owing to the thorns on the bushes, which were as long as a finger. They wormed their way among the bushes and thickets in order to avoid the constant stings as much as possible. However careful you may be, your gloves, felt boots and clothes are in a sorry state after a day's ride over this wild ground. In some places the ground is very porous, in others it looks as though the surface had been boiling and had suddenly stiffened into a crust. The horses moved with difficulty on this uneven, hard surface. At a distance the southern bank seems to be of the same character as the northern one, though the edge of the wood seems to be slightly higher than on our side. The bed of the river is quite $1\frac{1}{3}$ miles wide here. The river flows in two arms, the southern one being the larger. The northern arm is about 20 fathoms broad. Speed $10/9$ m per second. According to the statements of the population it can only be forded during two months in the autumn or late summer. During the rest of the year traffic is impossible. About $1\frac{1}{3}$ miles further west the two arms join and cover an area of about a mile and a half in width. We followed