

river flows in an arm, five fathoms in width, with a swift, noisy current. The herds of the Kalmuks were grazing on the other side. I counted 29 head of cattle and about 20 horses.

For a couple of miles the road runs in the very bed of the river, and then leads slightly up the slope of the W mountain, along which it goes for the rest of the day. On the left we passed a large cleft, from which two water channels lead down to the Togra-su. Approximately opposite, on the other bank, a gorge, divided into two and with a few trees growing in it, was visible with Kalmuk yurts. Both the gorge and the water channel running through it are called Aidung Bulaq. The road runs more and more to the NW. Trees and clefts grow rarer on the E bank. After riding about 10 miles we reached the Hammer dawan gorge on the left with a frozen river bed. Later, when the snow has melted to some extent, you can get through it to the Burdum Bulaq gorge and along it to the valley a little S of Shatâ. From this place the mountain in the W takes the name of Hammer dawan tagh. The E one is called Buga tagh. As though to remind us of the name, we heard a bugan roaring in the wood close to the road. Two-thirds of a mile further on lies the sarai of Adingei, built of logs, and as poor and uninviting as the last. Just on the other side of a little depression there were two Kalmuk yurts. One of them, belonging to the Government, was prepared for me by some Kalmuks, stationed here to forward the Chinese official mails. I was received by some indescribably shabby Kalmuks, clad in leather or fur garments that were black from smoke and dirt. They wore Chinese pigtails and their clothes had a Chinese cut. A big fire was burning on the slope close to the yurts and the same group of wandering men and women, who spent yesterday with us and the night at Khan Jailik, were encamped round it. The Kalmuks belonged to the Armusumus tribe which, apparently, has its grazing grounds a couple of days' journey E of Shatâ.

After a cold night in the yurt, in spite of my men sharing a room with me, we started at about 7 this morning. The road goes along the slope of the western mountain, some way up it. From the first it was fairly steep and the frozen paths leading up were inconceivably slippery. Wherever possible, you ride up through the drifts by the side of the road, but where there is a narrow path with steep slopes on either side, there is nothing for it but to slide down or scramble up as best you can. A mile and a half from Adingei, on a small open space in the wood, we met a Kalmuk family on the point of moving with their yurt. Some oxen were laden with the different parts of the yurt and other household goods. The men of the family drove the cattle, while the mother took charge of the smaller children. A small boy sat his horse with a still smaller member of the family in his lap and two large leather bags attached to the saddle, from which the small bleating heads of lambs protruded. The mother held an infant in her lap and led by the bridle two horses, on which a couple of urchins were perched. She wore a curious dress, with a bodice cut like a waistcoat and edged with lace, and a black skull-cap with a bunch of corals, from which a fringe-like tuft depended. Opposite the open space on which the yurt stood, a wooded gorge was visible on the opposite bank with a river bed called Bugtaghnung-su. The road becomes more and more breakneck, running in a narrow path along the side of a mountain, perpendicular in some places. Now it descends at the mouth of a gorge, then again it climbs high up on the mountain side. It is so slippery that even the Kalmuk mother with