

her infants had to dismount. One of their cows had dropped and no blows were of any avail. The horses kept slipping constantly and at any moment we expected them to roll down into the abyss. No sooner have you negotiated a dangerous place with a sigh of relief than you come to another, infinitely worse. At a bend, where I had dismounted to take a photograph, I heard loud shouts behind me. I just had time to jump and hang on to a rock above the road, when one of the Kalmuks' oxen, bearing the long poles of the yurt, swept past me. If any of us or the horses had been on the outer edge, this colossus, puffing like a railway engine, would have swept us into the depths.

The mountain on the left takes the name of Khaltyr Bulaq tagh; the one on the other side is called Shugat tagh. On the W bank the thick fir wood seldom leaves any space for a small bald patch on the slope. — Something new, after the last few days. The eastern bank has here a border of trees along its ledge. On its slope you see a gorge that is called Shugat Bulaq. From here the road takes a distinctly westerly direction. The side of the mountain, along which we proceeded, grew steeper and the road climbed it to a respectable height, becoming more and more difficult. The opposite chain of mountains takes the name of Marts tagh at this place. The river flowed far beneath us. We could scarcely hear its roar. At some places the road is strengthened with logs. Their frozen surface is quite as slippery as the road. When you dismount, you have the greatest difficulty in keeping your feet and it is not easy to understand how the horses manage on their smooth Sart shoes. At one place the road makes three sharp bends to get from one point to another, less than a fathom off. This was the hardest part of the road to-day, even harder than any part of the whole Muzart road. The aneroid barometer indicated 581.8, a mile or two further on 596.4. At the end of the descent the gorge widens and forms a large, unwooded triangle between the two mountains referred to and a third, Marl tagh, projecting from the W and going S—N. From the S the river Dundugol su runs into the Shatâ musur su from a gorge between the Hammer dawan tagh and the Marl tagh. To the N the valley opens, the mountains disappear and are replaced by the broad valley of the river Tekes, bounded on the N by a chain of mountains, the outlines of which are visible in the distance. At the boundary of this valley lies the little village of Shatâ at the foot of the last spur of the Marts tagh. Many Kalmuk yurts were visible close to the river. Their grazing herds could be seen in various places on the plain and hills.

Shatâ is in reality not a village, but a military post guarding the Russian frontier, against raids by the Kirghiz it is alleged. Sixteen wooden houses, exactly alike, extend along the village street of about 100 paces in length and at the end of the street there is a slightly bigger house. My luggage had been deposited in the latter which was occupied by the commander of the post, at present on a journey to Qulja. In one of the two small rooms there was a small sheet-iron stove. The draught from the floor, built of loose boards with no floor lining, created a hothouse temperature after a few minutes' heating. Some pages of the Daily Graphic were pasted on the walls. In Central Asia you can almost guess, who has left a printed page, a newspaper etc. behind. A couple of Russian oleographs, one depicting boyards on a bear hunt, the other the heroic repulse of an attempt to storm the walls of Port Arthur, indicated the proximity of the Russian frontier. The men