



*The horses of the caravan swimming across the Ili.*

Some way from Khoguntche we crossed an old canal or a small arm of the Ili, about three fathoms wide and 0.35 metres deep with a firm bottom. On the right a small water-bed skirts the road and a little before the Ili a larger one, about 4 fathoms wide. The Ili river is reached opposite it at a place, where, after flowing in two arms, it flows in a single bed about 50 fathoms wide. Here it describes a curve almost like an S, the current in the river turning almost at a right angle. This peculiarity of the current and a quiet cove on the right bank are utilised by a ferry that attends to traffic between the two banks, which are flat on either side here and afford good landing places. The ferry is hauled along the bank by some horses, ropes being simply tied to their tails and their efforts being assisted by the ferrymen on foot with long hawsers. On reaching a suitable spot the horses are collected on the side on which the current passes the bows of the ferry. The ferry is then pushed out into the river. The horses which usually offer some resistance, are whipped up and off goes the ferry, tugged by a group of swimming horses and carried by the swift current. The ferry is heavily laden as a rule with people and goods and often with as many as 8 horses. For the sake of economy, however, caravans prefer to unsaddle the horses and drive them into the river in a bunch. Once they are caught by the current, they cannot help but swim across.

Of the road we covered the stretch from Avat to Tamga-tash is bare of grass or almost so. The part of the road N of the glacier often has an excellent crop of grass in the summer, from May 1/14 to October 1/14. On the other side of the river we passed a couple of water-channels, dry just now, and reached a steep ledge of the bank. The road leads up to this at the place where it is cut by the river, or rather, stream Dshirgalan. On the right of the Dshirgalan stands an oil mill, surrounded by a shady garden. As I discovered later, an Austrian is employed here, fate having guided him here and forced him to enter the