

that contained iron. In front of us and slightly to the left was the snow-capped chain of the Kok-su mountains, from which we were separated by a succession of mountains, partly covered with grass, partly bare, with easy slopes. On the right we had the same hills, devoid of woods, but partly covered with grass. On the highest ridge of the slope we passed a Torgut praying site, decorated with sticks, bits of cloth, horns of mountain sheep, burkhuns etc. This hill forms the watershed between the Yulduz and the Kok-su. The road leads down to the Yavur Khargan usun, a tributary of the Kok-su.

At the praying site Numgan and I parted from the men with the pack-horses. After wandering upwards for a time I caught sight of two wild sheep at a spot where the hill dips and forms a kind of ravine of gravel and sand. The sheep caught sight of us at the same time and had begun to make off at an easy gallop. In a moment we had dismounted and taken cover. As I crept along and approached the edge of the ravine, the irresolute animals came into sight, stopping several times on the lookout for the monsters that had disappeared so suddenly. I fired two shots and brought down the larger one, an old male with large, heavy horns, the sad condition of whose coat showed that he had been through a good deal. I was delighted to see the splendid animal roll down the slope and we were not long in following it at a pace that might have proved fatal.

The Yavur Khargan usun flows from N to S here after describing a curve from the W. The mountains to the W of us, through which it flows, rise in a number of ledges and are very fantastic in shape. After sunset, in the dusk, you could imagine that you were among medieval castles, Gothic churches, walls of fortresses, cemeteries etc. They consist of a conglomeration of sand and stone. Streams of fallen stones had formed along all the crevices.

It is possible to reach Kurdai dawan from here over Sarry tur and Khurda dawan in 4 or 5 days and the road thence to Kok-su is said to be rough and stony. East of Khurda dawan droppings are used exclusively as fuel. Khurda dawan is open during July—September.

Over Jambe dawan you reach the Dshirgalan in two days. Grass, water and fuel are available. The pass is only fit for horsemen. It is open from July to September.

*June 22nd.* Yesterday was an exhausting day. We started at 5 a.m., and when I returned at 5 p.m., *Camp at* wet through to the waist after having to wade twice on slippery stones across the river, *Yavur Khar-* which grew rapid towards evening, I was thoroughly tired. Numgan and I explored the *gan usun.* mountains N and NW of our camp. Their innumerable gorges form a veritable labyrinth of mountain walls that take on the most amazing shapes owing to the influence of the water and storms, forming thousands of towers, walls, spires, windows, grottoes, clefts etc. In some places there is grass on the surface, growing in tufts among the small stones, in others the surface is bare and uneven, consisting of caked sand and stone, but frequently it is made up of loose masses of small fallen stones. The slightest weight is enough to set the outer layer in motion and occasionally you travel a considerable distance downward without having to move your feet. It goes without saying that climbing is no easy matter, yet it is easier here than in some places, for you can reach a considerable height on horseback