

valleys in particular, being unshod, moved with great difficulty. For $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 miles the gorge goes in a SSW direction, then for about the same distance SSE and again SSW up to its mouth. Approximately on a level with the second turning a gorge, Ikhne Yambotö usun, opens in the right wall. Halfway between it and the mouth of the gorge we passed a Kalmuk praying site consisting of a large block of stone covered with smaller stones. Goats and human figures were roughly carved on one side of the block. They were apparently very ancient.

We heaved a sigh of relief, when, after riding about 11 miles, we turned S and at last saw no mountains between us and the plain in the south. Izmail and my Mohammedan yigit each dropped a coin at a Kalmuk praying site in their joy at getting away from this horrible ground at length. We crossed the river twice here and then took a SE course that led us away from it. At its outlet from the mountains it is 140 feet wide and 0.6 m deep. The ground we rode over was gravel and stone, still without any grass. On leaving the gorge we also left the wind behind us. The sun was scorching and even the stones seemed to generate heat. For another $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles we still had mountains on our left, though they grew less by degrees and finally changed into a high terrace-shaped ledge of gravel that accompanied us for about the same distance. About $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the mouth of the gorge we crossed a small arm of the river that wound murmuring between the gravel and stone. Bushes and some miserable trees grew along its banks. By the edge of the water there was a strip of luscious grass which our horses devoured greedily. It was getting late, however, and we had to push on to our camping place next to some Kalmuk yurts 3—4 miles further on. They were inhabited by some Torguts engaged in farming and were situated on the river Tsagan Tungan usun, 30 feet wide and 0.4 m deep, an arm of the Chaptchka usun. About 300 Torgut yurts till the land in the neighbourhood of Qarashahr. They use Sart ploughs and in the way of cattle they keep only what is essential for cartage and a few cows for milking. For this reason the other Torguts look upon them as poor creatures. They look fairly prosperous, however. The land yields a 6—7 fold crop. Only wheat is grown. Grass appears $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 miles before reaching the Tsagan Tungan usun. It is tall, grows in tufts and is very coarse.

July 5th. We started early this morning in order, if possible, to cover the 30—33 miles to Qarashahr in one stretch. The direction is SSE the whole way. The ground was gravel with coarse grass growing in tufts, much of it last year's. The horses moved forward very unwillingly owing to their tender hooves and their exhaustion after the exertions of the last few days. We crossed a small stream flowing southward and rode across a slight rise in the ground in an ENE—WSW direction. Having ridden six miles, we reached the village of Vangjafu with 20 houses. The gravel was now succeeded by löss, cultivated here and there. Two of my horses were unable to get as far as this and had dropped a few miles back. I left a yigit in the village with orders to carry water to them and try to get them to the town next day. We went on over the same plain, riding for a time along a small stream. The grass was very tall and coarse, often almost bushy. Here and there a couple of low trees indicated the presence of a rivulet or stream. The road was trodden hard and was