

## CHAPTER XII.

## BY THE SKIRTS OF THE PAMIRS TO HUNZA.

THE Raskam River is what is usually considered the main branch of the river which flows by Yarkand, but till now the Oprang branch of this river had not been explored, and this latter certainly has a claim to be considered the main branch. The Raskam is the longer branch of the two, being about a hundred and eighty miles from its source, which was explored by Hayward to its junction with the Oprang at Chong Jangal; while the Oprang, as now explored by me from near its source throughout its course, is not more than a hundred and fifty miles. But the Oprang, in the month of October at any rate, has quite twice the volume of water—a fact which is easily understood when it is considered what a vast area of glaciers along the main range it drains.

Between these two branches of the Yarkand River lies a range which, so far as I could learn, can only be crossed at the Aghil Pass. It runs in a general north-west direction, parallel to and intermediate between the Mustagh Range and the western Kuen-lun Mountains. It is a hundred and twenty miles in length, and is broken up into a series of bold up-standing peaks, the highest of which must be close on twenty-three thousand feet. Near its junction with the Mustagh Mountains there are some large glaciers like those which fill the valleys leading down from the main watershed, but towards its western extremity these vast *mers de glace* are not seen, and