

crossed by Russian military parties; (3) by the Bash Gumbaz and Khargosh Passes—both practicable for ponies to the Great Pamir; and (4) that by the Kokbai Pass to Shakhdarra. All these passes have been crossed and recrossed repeatedly by Russian military parties. They are most of them between fourteen thousand and fifteen thousand feet in height, and consequently about two thousand feet above the valley bottom.

The Neza-tash Pass, which we now crossed on our way eastward to the valley of the Aksu, is about fourteen thousand two hundred feet in height, and on the west side is very easy of ascent. The descent is more difficult, and is steep and stony. It led us down the Karasu stream to the Aksu River, just before that enters the gorges which henceforth confine it. At the point where we struck it the valley was flat, and more than a mile in width, and covered with good grass, and I was informed by the Kirghiz with me that this spot was called Sarez. It must be distinguished from the Sarez a little lower down, but this is probably the part which the "Sarez Pamir" marked on so many maps is meant to indicate. It might be said to extend from the vicinity of the mouth of the Karasu stream to near the junction of the Ak-baital with the Aksu.

At this latter point, on the right bank of the Aksu, is Murghabi. At the time of my visit there was nothing here but four or five Kirghiz tents among the pasturages by the river, and some old tombs on the high ground above, but there is now a Russian outpost permanently established. It is a dreary, desolate spot, twelve thousand four hundred feet above sea-level, with a certain amount of grassy pasture and a few scrubby bushes by the river, but surrounded by barren hills, and bitterly cold. How these Russian soldiers can support existence there is a marvel, but they can hardly do so without frequent relief. I can well imagine the joy it must be to them to return to more genial quarters. One can