

After a couple of days' rest at Sansing, we turned southward and ascended the Hurka river to Ninguta. The road was execrable. We still had our carts, and how we, or rather the drivers, managed to get them along a road really fit only for pack-animals was a marvel. There was a constant series of ascents and descents of spurs running down to the river. These were nearly always steep, and the road narrow and rocky. Small villages were only occasionally met with, and the country was far less well populated than that we had recently come through. The hills were covered with woods of oak and birch, and their summits with pines. Amongst them, it was said, there were gold-mines, which, however, it was only permissible for government to work, as the Chinese think that indiscriminate gold-mining only leads to fighting, quarrelling and trouble; the emperor therefore absolutely forbids his subjects to mine for gold. We crossed numerous side streams, and these, as well as the Hurka itself, swarm with fish, mostly salmon. The natives form dams across the side streams, and catch them in hundreds. So at this time, what with pheasants, ducks, geese,