

divided into many branches, a mile wide in all, the water in the deep channels being waist-deep, and the next day arrived at Ush Turfan, a picturesque little town at the foot of a rugged hill, with a fort on its summit.

From here we passed through a country cultivated at first, but afterwards relapsing into the more or less barren condition which is characteristic of the district. The sides of the hills which bounded the valley we were ascending were not, however, so utterly barren as many we had passed. There was a quantity of scrub and small bushes on them, and, higher up, fine grassy slopes in places. At the end of the march we reached a Kirghiz encampment of twenty-two tents. Here were the first Kirghiz I had met; but most of the men were with their flocks and herds, higher up on the mountain-sides, and it was only the very old and the very young that were left below with what might be called the heavy camp equipage. Having no tent of my own, and there being no public inn, I was obliged to do as the people of the country do, and seek the hospitality of the inhabitants of the tents. This was, as usual, readily given. We rode up to a tent,