

the western frontiers of the country from Kákshál on the north, round by Tirik Dawán and Taghárma, to Karákash on the south. Its continuity is interrupted in the south-west by the Sárigh Kúl division above described, but for the rest its most notable peculiarity is the utter absence, other than military outposts, of fixed habitation or cultivation. Yet it has a permanent population which, within the limits of its several divisions, regularly migrates from the low to the high lands according to the seasons, and on each roams as the necessities of its requirements may dictate. And this periodical movement from one region to the other is attended by a noteworthy, though temporary, transfer of allegiance from one ruler to another, except in the southern portion of the division which is wholly within the Amír's limits.

This anomalous arrangement is the result of the existing distribution of this natural home of the Kirghiz between three different rulers—the Russians, the Khan of Khokand, and the Amír of Káshghar. Their respective shares in this partitioned territory are not very accurately defined, but this much appears to be certain that the summer and winter quarters of certain of the nomad camps are in the territories of different rulers. Thus the Kirghiz of Kákshál, which is Káshghar territory, in summer pasture on the upper Narin and Atbáshí beyond Chádir Kol, which is Russian territory, and are there joined by the nomads of Aktágh, which is the name of that part of the Alátágh range between Chádir Kol and Tirik Dawán; now the camps in the southern valleys of Aktágh are Káshghar subjects right up to the sources of the Tuman river on which the capital stands, whilst those in the northern valleys draining to Uzkan are Khokand subjects; and both in summer pasture on Russian territory.

Similarly the Kirghiz of Karátágh, the range extending from the Tirik Dawán to Tágharma, who are all Káshghar subjects, roam the plateaux of Aláy and Kizil Art with the Kirghiz of Osh and Andiján, who are Khokand subjects, as their common summer pastures; though the territory belongs to Káshghar, and has done so since its first annexation, together with Sárigh Kúl, by Mirza Abábakar at the period of the Uzbek invasion about the end of the fifteenth century, as is recorded in the *Taríkhí Rashídí*. The author of that book states that Abábakar conquered all this hill region up to Sárigh Chopán or Tangi Wakhán and annexed it to the *diwan* or "Civil jurisdiction" of Káshghar, but left the low valleys of Badakshán on the west to the Uzbek invaders.

In our maps this elevated tableland is called "Pámir steppe," but it is not known specifically by this name to the Kirghiz, who are its only frequenters. So far as I can judge from the descriptions given to me by several Kirghiz whom I have questioned on the subject the general configuration of the country would seem to resemble that of the Khurásán range of tablelands extending from Mashhad to Mekrán, or the tablelands of Belochistán from Khozdár to Shál, both of which I have seen. This Pámir steppe (which in this account, though the name is not known to the Kirghiz, I have designated Bolortágh, as that is the name by which the region is spoken of in the *Taríkhí Rashídí*) bears some noteworthy points of topographical resemblance to the Khurásán range. Both are cross ranges running north and south to connect parallel mountain systems whose main direction is east and west, and both separate wide plains or river basins. Thus the Khurásán tablelands connect the Alburz range with that of Mushti in Belochistán, and separates the hydrographic basin of Sístán from the corresponding basin in the desert of Yezd and Kirmán. So the tablelands of Bolor connect the Alátágh range with that of Himalaya, and separate the basin of the Tárím from that of the Oxus.

These latter, too, from the descriptions I have heard, would seem to resemble the Khurásán highlands in their general features of arrangement. Thus they are characterized as consisting of a number of subordinate ranges which run parallel to each other, and enclose between them those open spreads of pasture plateaux, here called *pámir* and in Khurásán *Julaga* or *Jilga*. These drain according to the direction of the hills and the lie of the land either to the east or to the west, by insignificant streams which coalesce and form considerable rivers only after they have passed beyond the plateaux. In one respect the *pámir* and the *jilga* differ; the former owing to the prohibitory nature of the climate and altitude have no fixed habitations whatever, whereas the latter, not as a rule, but only where climate and elevation admit, have such permanent abodes as villages, gardens and fields. Many of these plateaux,