

to cross the then swollen river.* After a while our road left the main valley which makes a detour to the left and ascends a gentle slope to a low pass, crossing which the path returns along another broad valley to our camp at Langar. This point has been considered the end of the Pamír, but I should rather be inclined to consider Gombáz-i-Bozai as the true ending. This would reduce its length from Aktash to about 56 miles.

Our next day's march (6th from Táshkurghán) was to Daráz Diwan, a distance of 15 miles; the road soon struck the main valley and continued along its northern side over a constant succession of ascents and descents, passing occasionally through snow in deep patches. We saw on the hill side a large number of juniper trees, and in some of the side ravines were birch trees and wild roses. In fact, wherever water trickled down there were signs of vegetation, but everywhere else the hills were bare. In one or two places the road descended to the river bank; in places the stream was entirely frozen over, the water flowing underneath, elsewhere it was altogether clear of ice. At two or three such places I estimated the breadth to be about 40 feet, depth 2 feet, and velocity $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour, temperature of water 35° . Before reaching camp was a very steep descent, having a fall of over 1,000 feet, which it only took a quarter of an hour to walk down. The river is here called by various names, Kanjúd, Sarhadd, Panjáh, and *Hamun*. The last name I have heard more than once, and it is of course the same as "Amú." Wakhán seems to be but little better off than Turkestan in the numerous names borne by the same stream. Our seventh day's march (8th April) was at first, as hitherto, on the right bank of the stream, the road crossing high spurs by very steep ascents and descents (which lead me to suppose that this was the road followed by Marco Polo). There are three roads used at different times of the year, one (in midwinter) on the surface of the frozen stream, a second which we followed, occasionally along the stream, but which generally passed over spurs, and a third, much higher up, and avoiding the stream altogether. We passed several small tributary streams and between the fifth and seventh miles we had to cross the main stream many times where it passed through very steep hills. We crossed generally over ice and snow bridges. At last we emerged into a large open gravelly plain watered by several streams and soon arrived at the village of Sarhadd (head of the boundary), the highest inhabited village of the Wakhán valley, and situated about 11,000 feet above the sea. The march was only 11 miles, but difficult. We were here met by Ali Murdan Shah, the eldest son of the Mír of Wakhán, who had marched out from Panjah to meet us. On the 8th day (from Táshkurghán) we took a very short march of only four miles to the large village of Patuch or Patur. From this day forward, in order to avoid all cause of suspicion, I took no observations on the road, but accompanied the rest of the party on the march. We were now a large detachment, as we were always escorted by the Mír Bachcha and his somewhat ragged following. This march was, while it lasted, the most trying I have ever experienced, owing to the intense bitterness of the cold wind and drifting snow which blew in our faces the whole way.

From Patuch to Kila Panjah, the residence of the Chief of Wakhán, there is not much of geographical interest to notice. At Yúr, 15 miles west of Patuch, a very difficult pathway crosses the mountains to Chitral, and at Vost, about seven miles short of the junction of the two Pámír streams, there is a small fort which covers the entrance of a valley up which another footpath leads to Chitral. The road from Patuch to Panjah, about fifty miles in length, lay along the valley of the Sarhadd stream, sometimes on one side of it, sometimes on the other. The valley was bounded on both sides by lofty and generally precipitous mountains, of whose height it was impossible to form any idea, as their tops and the greater part of their sides were always wrapped in clouds and mists. It was perhaps fortunate for me that I was unable to use my instruments, as I know nothing more disheartening to a surveyor than proceeding for days down a valley under such circumstances. Villages were scattered all along the road on both sides of the stream. In the whole distance from Sarhadd to Panjah there are probably about 400 houses, and their corner turrets, like those in the Sarikól valley, are evidence that the inhabitants have not fallen upon much easier times than their neighbours of Sarikól. The houses are not so good as those of Turkestan, and are apparently especially designed to keep out the wind, which seems always to be blowing violently either up or down the valley, generally speaking from west in the

* The road by the great Pamir is then adopted.