

irrigation or for water mills. In the hot weather, oxen, horses, and sheep (for which the country is famous) are driven up side valleys to the tops of the mountains for grazing, returning to the valley in October in splendid condition.

Kuguz Parin consists of a tunnel passing through a mountain. On the south side, the road rises by a winding stone staircase, for a height of about 200 feet, to the mouth of the tunnel, which is excavated through solid rock, and is about 100 paces in length, and so narrow and low that it is impossible for a loaded horse to traverse it. The tunnel is said to have been constructed some three hundred years ago. Where the road emerges on the north side the path is so narrow that a projecting mass of rock often precipitates animals into the foaming torrent beneath. The river is here about 150 yards in width, and flows some 500 feet below the mouth of the tunnel.* The Shighnis boast of this place as the natural safeguard of their country, and call it their "father."

From Kuguz Parin the Oxus flows through the country of Shighnán, which extends for a distance of sixty miles down to the Darband Tower on the frontier of Roshán. This tower is situated on a high rock standing over the river, towards which it presents a perpendicular scarp of about 150 feet. The water beneath is very deep. The roadway winds round the tower,† and the ascent on both sides is very steep and difficult. The Shighnis call this place their "mother." It is a common saying in the country that if ever there should be a quarrel between Shighnan and Roshán, whichever State first seizes this tower will keep possession of both countries. The river is here barely a gunshot across, and there is no path whatever on the other side.

This country of Shighnan would appear to be richer and of much more importance than Wakhan and other districts of Badakhshán with which we are acquainted. From Kuguz Parin to Darband Tower there are numerous villages scattered along both banks of the river.‡ These are surrounded with gardens, orchards and well cultivated lands. The chief town, Bar Panjah,§ is on the left bank, and with its suburbs probably contains about 1,500 houses. The palace is inside the fort, and is built of stone; the windows have shutters outside as in Cabul and Cashmere. The fort itself is square, each side being about 500 paces in length. The walls are very strong, and about 40 feet high, built of clay, stone, and wood. There are five loopholed towers, but these contain no big guns. There is a garrison of about 400 soldiers, who are mostly armed with swords manufactured in the country itself, and with guns, said to be made by the Kirghiz, similar to those which are supplied to the Kashghar troops *viz.*, heavy rifled weapons which are fired resting on the ground, the muzzle being supported on a prong attached to the barrel of the rifle. Lead and all the materials employed in the manufacture of gunpowder are found in the country. The valley at Bar Panjah is about four miles wide and contains a great many houses and gardens. The river runs in numerous channels separated by jungle covered islands. Short punt shaped boats, similar to those in Central India, are used at the ferry. In July and August, when there is much water in the river, all travellers have to cross at Bar Panjah, to the other bank, the road on the left bank being then impracticable.

In its passage through Shighnán the Oxus receives two considerable affluents on the left bank, the Shewa and Vacherv River. The former is crossed by a good bridge, and was about 25 yards in width, and unfordable, when the Múnshi passed in May. It flows from a lake in the Shewá Pamir, a favored pasture ground much frequented by herds of horses, sheep, and cattle from Badakhshán. The owners of these flocks are said to make payments to the King of Shighuán for the right of grazing there. The Vacherv River is about the same size as the Shewa stream, and joins the Panjah to the south of Bar Panjah. Along it lies a much frequented road from Shighnan, over the Shewa Pámir, to Faizabad.

* This portion of the route is not improbably the *Tangi Badascani* of Benedict Goetz.

† At the tower was a guard of soldiers from Wamur, who examined the passports of all travellers.

‡ The names of these villages and the distances apart will be found in the Appendix.

§ Or "above Panjah" so named from having been built originally over a stone similar to the one at Kila Panjah, which was supposed to bear the impress of the *Panjah* or *palm* of Hazrat Ali.

Shighnan