

Panjah on the 26th of April (the day previous to which was the first warm day we had since leaving Yangi-Hissar, the thermometer in the shade going up to 74° and in the sun to 99°) we made a short march of only six miles to Langarkish (9,350 feet), the highest inhabited spot on the road up to the lake. We passed on the left the villages of Zang and Hissar, between which is a hot spring* (temperature 120°) enclosed in a stone building and said to possess valuable curative properties, for the sake of which the old Mír occasionally visits the spot. I may note that hot springs are of frequent occurrence in these mountains; some near Patur in the Sarhadd valley have a temperature of about 160° . These springs have a sensible influence on the temperature of the rivers they flow into, a fact which tends to neutralize any argument (such as that used by Wood) that the relative elevation of the sources of the two branches of the Oxus, may be estimated from the temperature of the streams at their junction.

Where the two Pámir streams meet opposite Zang, the united river was about 40 yards wide and one and a half feet deep, with a velocity of three and a half miles per hour. This measurement was taken at 11 A. M. at which period of the day the river had not attained its full size and velocity. In the hot weather at Panjah it cannot be forded, but is crossed by rafts made of skins.

Close by the village of Hissar (or Asshor) on a small isolated rocky hill, is the ancient fort (or kila or kalhai) of Zanguebar, which I examined in hopes of finding some relic of Zoroastrian worship. The ruined walls had, within memory, been used as dwelling-houses by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village, but I could discern no relics of antiquity, except fragments of a surrounding wall, and an arch formed by large slabs of stone resting, on either side, on solid rock.

At Langar Kish, a very picturesque village, a fair sized stream from the north joined the main stream, passing through one of those characteristic fissures I have before alluded to. I tried to ascend it, but was very soon stopped by enormous boulders lying in the bed of the stream which flows between perpendicular rocky banks. From this village we had to take all our supplies for the return journey to Sarikól, and as collecting sufficient even for a rapid journey was found to be a matter of considerable difficulty, we had here reluctantly to give up all idea of halting on the road or making any detour for exploration.

Our first march from Langar Kish was about 18 miles to Yumkhana (also called Jangalik). The road follows the right bank of the river rising above it in several places as much as 1,000 feet. From both sides occasional small mountain streams help to swell the waters of the main river. We passed on our right several ruined huts formerly occupied by Kirghiz, who many years ago abandoned this part of the country. The descendants of the men who accompanied Wood on this same journey, driven away by the insecurity of life and property, are now many of them quietly settled, hundreds of miles away, in the neighbourhood of Kilian and Sanju, under the rule of the Amír of Kashghar. Not a single Kirghiz, I was given to understand, remains even under the nominal sway of the Mír of Wakhan. As we advanced the valley opened somewhat, and the mountains on the south appeared to decrease in height, radiating from a pointed peak situated between the two branches of the Panjah River. After a time we came to the Ab-i-Zer-i-Zamin, a stream flowing from the north-west through banks 1,000 feet in height. We had to descend to the bed of the stream, cross and ascend the opposite side, and then traverse a plain, formed by a broad terrace at the foot of the range on our left, and situate about 1,000 feet above the bed of the Oxus. Four miles after passing the Zer-i-Zamin River we reached our camp, where some springs and rich soil had combined to produce a profusion of grass and fire-wood. From our tents we had a very fine view down the valley, seeing in particular one very prominent snowy peak, probably 20,000 feet in height, situated near the head of the glacier opposite Panjah. Next day we continued along the right bank of the river, passing, after five miles, the Ab-i-Matz, along which

* Curiously enough a cold spring with a temperature of 60° F. issues from the ground within a few feet of the hot one.