

opposite side of the river. We were told that a very little higher up the stream was fordable in spring and autumn; but now the ford was so fringed and beset with ice and the river so dammed up with ice-floes that to attempt to effect a passage seemed quite dangerous. Still, we resolved to try, and procuring baulks of timber and doors from the village houses, we constructed a very rough and simple bridge from ice-fringe to ice-fringe. On both banks the fringe was so soft that men and donkeys sank through it, but neither suffered serious harm, and the whole caravan was transferred in safety to the left bank. A short distance further up we had to recross, but at that place, fortunately, the ice was sound, and we had no trouble. Proceeding up the right bank, we had a view of the village of Kozey which, surrounded with apricot and other trees, provided an agreeable variation in the monotonous landscape. Beyond this village there was no room to ascend on the right bank, but there was an ice-fringe jutting out a few feet from the cliff, and on this the unladen donkeys were able to walk and thus avoid the crossing. The rest of the caravan had to cross by a ford, rather deep and very stony, but quite free from loose ice, a couple of camels having been provided to carry over the baggage. Twice again the ponies had to cross the stream before we reached Beldir, a village which at first seemed utterly deserted. On our approach every house appeared shut up, and not an inhabitant was to be seen, but by and by some Kozey villagers arrived, and then the Beldir people began to show themselves. They had never seen a European, for before me none had ever penetrated into that dreary valley, and the inhabitants had probably been terrified by strange reports.

On both sides of this valley were numerous small villages, which for months in summer must be almost