

Fifteen years later I learned with regret on the Taghdumbash Pamir how rough Bolshevik treatment had deprived Kökan Beg of almost all his possessions and driven him for refuge into Chinese territory, where he afterwards died.

From that capable headman I first learned of the great lake which after a mighty earthquake four years before had formed in the Murghab river valley. Covering what had previously been the Sarez Pamir, this new lake was declared completely to block the route by which I had intended to reach the Alichur Pamir across the Marjanai pass. I did not care to turn to the well-known route past the Russian station known as the Pamirski Post, but decided to move down to Saunab, the last village at the head of the Roshan valley. I hoped for a chance of being thence able to make my way up the Murghab and to find a passage past the great barrage which had created the new lake. Kökan Beg did not believe that with our baggage we could possibly get round it. But then I knew that for Kirghiz, who never will walk if they can possibly help it, a passage would mean one practicable for animals.

A day's halt at Kara-chim was utilized for collecting anthropological measurements from the Kirghiz there encamped, good specimens of that hardy Turkish tribe (Fig. 130) which in scanty numbers braves the rigours of the Pamir climate with icy blasts in the winter. Then we passed back again towards the Tanimaz river. As we crossed to its right bank some distance below the point where its main feeder from a great glacier of the Muz-tagh massif turns south, we soon found the valley floor completely smothered under enormous masses of rock debris. The same cataclysm which blocked the Murghab valley had thrown them down