

by the route of Dozakh-dara. It appropriately derives its name, corresponding to the 'Höllenthal' so common in the Alps, from the troublesome slopes of rock debris of an old moraine which chokes its head for miles.

Descending then the Ghund-dara from where the Russian cart road connecting Pamirski Post and the Alichur Pamir with Khoruk joins in, I gained some impressions of the middle portion of this great valley of which I had sighted the head just a month before from above the outflow of the Yeshil-köl. There were recollections to be gathered here from greybeards serving as depositories of local tradition about intermittent Chinese control as well as of the severe exactions under which Shughnan had suffered during the last local Mirs or chiefs. Their practice of selling women and children as slaves to increase their revenue was said to have led to extensive emigration to the Khanates in the north. This accounted for the half-deserted condition of several picturesque villages we passed on the way.

Subsequent Afghan rule and the regime from Bukhara which had followed it for a time had been almost equally oppressive, and though the direct Russian control under 'military politicals' as the Indian phrase has it, secured a great improvement, it had not lasted long enough at the time of my passage to repair these ravages. One could hardly then have foreseen how soon the Russian revolution and the rise of the Soviet would carry fresh troubles and sufferings into these secluded alpine valleys of the Oxus region.