

Kirghiz intermarriage with Tajik women, of which I learnt on my passage through Kara-tegin, illustrates another potent process by which the old Iranian population has gradually transformed the racial character of its Turkish conquerors if not altogether absorbing them.

At Gharm, the headquarters of the 'Mir' administering Kara-tegin, I spent a pleasant day's halt on October 11 encamped in that hospitable dignitary's large garden. It afforded interesting glimpses of the quaint mediaeval style of official pomp and circumstance then still surviving in these quiet backwaters of Western Turkistan. Thence two enjoyable marches carried me down to the point where the valley of the Surkh-ab turning south greatly contracts and for a considerable distance ceases to be practicable for trade. There near the village of Ab-i-garm, called after its hot springs, our route turned off westwards. It was no doubt the same which those ancient silk traders had followed to Baktra.

There I left behind the last of the valleys which descend from the Pamir region and entered the open valley plains of the once independent chiefship of Hissar drained by the Surkhan and Kafirnihan tributaries of the Oxus. It seemed hard to forgo a visit south to the Oxus where it passes nearest to Balkh, the ancient Baktra. But regard for the time needed to reach Sistan, my distant Persian goal, for the winter's work, obliged me to seek the Trans-Caspian railway at Samarkand by the nearest route and that as quickly as possible. So my journey across these comparatively well-known parts of the hill territory of Bukhara was done by nine rapid marches covering altogether some 270 miles.

The fertile region through which the first four of those