

community of nomadic herdsmen and the name of every grazing-ground. So it was easy for our Darogha to strengthen the band of labourers I had brought from Keriya by fresh recruits from among the shepherds. The men joined us readily enough; for uncouth and "jungly" as their appearance was, in rough furs and sandals made of goatskins, yet these supposed "semi-savages" were quite alive to the chance of earning a little hard cash that might come in useful on their periodical visits to Keriya and its Bazars. Thus my band kept swelling on the way like a small avalanche.

The route which we followed for three days from Kochkar Öghil downwards was new to me, but space does not permit more than a passing reference to one distinct change in scenery. The river, which down to this point had occupied a deep and narrow bed winding in rapid turns, now spread itself out in broad reaches. Though the channel actually filled with water was at the time only 80 to 100 yards wide, yet the clearly marked bed of the summer floods attained in places the imposing breadth of quite half a mile. The belt of vegetation, which accompanies the river on its course through the desert sand, did not spread out in the same proportion. But the increasing height of the Toghraks and the thickness of the Kumush beds showed that the moisture received from the river was plentiful wherever it reached.

On the 12th of March we crossed a high Dawan appropriately named 'Yoghan-kum' ("High Sands"), which juts out transversely into the river-bed, and is faced on the opposite eastern bank by similar high ridges of sand. But this obstacle once passed, wide room offered itself to the vagaries of the stream. From the height of the Yoghan-Kum I could make out no less than three dry beds spreading in different directions like the fingers of a hand. We followed the middle one—a wide, flat Nullah in which the yellow Kumush beds swayed by the breeze looked curiously like fields of ripe corn, down to where it met the actual river-course again near the shepherds' station known as Tonguz-baste. Here Ghazi Sheikh's flock was established for the time being. So hospitable offerings of sheep and milk turned up that evening. As usual, the end of the