

while the baggage moved on to Sanju by the main road, I turned back to the head of the Sulagh-aghzi stream and thence struck across the rising ground eastwards. It was a dreary ride between long-stretched conglomerate ridges, with not a drop of water in the broad valleys of scrub-covered loess between. The breeze, for which I felt grateful at first, soon developed into a dust-storm equally trying to eyes and throat. So I was heartily glad when at last the appearance through the haze of the curious flat-topped hill, known as 'Kizil-bash' from the red colour of its clay, marked the approach to the Sanju Valley.

A steep descent brought us down to the edge of the valley bottom, here about a mile and a half across, and refreshed by a welcome Dastarkhan of tea and fruit, sent ahead to a desolate little Langar, I hastened towards the oasis. The storm had dropped by the time we reached it, and the ride of some four miles through fields and orchards stretching along both banks of the river was cheering in spite of the thick dust-haze. The greyish-green water, filling in rapid flow a bed over sixty yards broad and some three feet deep, showed the great extent and near neighbourhood of the snows which feed the river.

The oasis of Sanju, divided into the four villages of Sawu, Saidulla, Baskak, and Dombak, is reckoned at a thousand houses. But from the extent of the irrigated area and the crowds I met returning from the weekly Bazar, this estimate appears distinctly too low. The Sanju Valley serves as the most frequented approach to the Kara-koram route, and its main oasis must derive substantial profit from the supplies taken for the Ladak caravans coming and going. I found some Hindu traders from Yarkand just preparing to set out for India, but vainly inquired about any arrivals from that direction, a proof how late is the opening of regular trade across the high Kara-koram passes. In order to reduce my baggage on the difficult journey *via* Chitral and Wakhan, I had despatched from Abbottabad three pony-loads *via* Ladak in charge of Musa, Muhammadju's companion. They contained my new water-tanks for the desert, spare photographic stores, survey instruments, and, among other