

run away, then halted again as we shouted, ducked, and re-appeared; but no command or friendly appeal would induce the man to advance and meet us. At last the men were upon him like dogs upon their prey, and approaching with my pack I found a lusty-looking young herdsman, in the quaint semi-savage get-up I remembered so well, goat-skins for shoes and leggings, a rough sheep-skin thrown over the body, and the head surmounted by a huge fur cap. The tame men from Shahyar might have been frightened if they had met such a figure alone. But under the uncouth appearance a good Muhammadan greeted them. To me, too, no 'Salam alaikum' had ever sounded more welcome.

My first question, of course, was as to where we were. When the man gave the name of Yaghan-kum for his grazing-ground our position at once became clear. Already the day before I had told the Surveyor and Ibrahim Beg that, judging from our plane-table work as checked by the last mid-day observation, we must be close to the latitude of Tonguz-baste. There, as I had observed in 1901, the river which had so far flowed in a well-defined bed first showed a tendency to strike off into branches. I remembered Yaghan-kum well as the name of a high ridge of sand lining its west bank just above the point where various old beds spread out like fingers.

Thus, after all, the old river course which Hedin had followed, and which I myself had seen in 1901 still full of water, lay to the east of the route we had moved by. At first look this was rather disconcerting, since according to our plane-table we were still a good deal east of the longitude previously assumed for Tonguz-baste. But luckily no such discrepancy, whatever its explanation, could affect our position. I knew that we had now reached the luxuriant jungle lining the Keriya River along its old bed, and that all troubles and doubts of this desert crossing were ended.

Guided by the young shepherd, whom a liberal present made forget his fright, we crossed the river a few miles higher up where it flowed still under a sound cover of ice. Marching down to the shepherd camp of Tonguz-baste, I was able to ascertain the exact point where the river, some