



Aquarell, by Hermann de Schlagintweit, August 1866, Dr. K. 34.

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The Valley of the Yarkand river, downwards from Déra Búllu, in Turkistán.

Balkh Lat. North 35° 49'

Long East of Green 77° 31'

Height (level of the river) 6883 Engl. feet.

The view of this region, where we arrived after a hard day's march from the northern foot of the Karakorum pass, presented a most melancholy and desolate aspect, which, however, was soon followed by tracts of still greater barrenness after leaving the valley and approaching the Kuenlun. At Déra Búllu the river, although of considerable breadth, is still fordable, its bed is cut through horizontal deposits of gravel, which rise like walls to a height of from thirty to fifty feet. We were surprised to find, in addition to a few isolated spots on its left bank covered with low carices, an arborescent plant of perfectly ligneous structure, which is probably an instance of such a growth at the extreme limits where the formation of woody fibre allows of ones recognizing annual rings for a space of time extending over many decades. This shrub, called "Yabagur" by the Turkistans, presents the peculiar appearance of arms radiating from the central stem close to the surface of the ground, the branches so closely adhering to the soil, as only to have attracted the attention of our guides, (who knew of its existence) as a precious, though at this moment unexpected fuel. Numerous remains, the waifs and strays of caravans crossing these heights, skeletons and carcasses of horses, baggage, saddles, fodder for animals of burden, and not unfrequently the low, temporary tomb of a Mussálmán, are the way-marks indicating this valley to be the road to Yarkand. The two dark rocks, a little lower down, are known under the name Chadartish, "the stone-tents," in allusion to their likeness to the broad Mongolian tents of dark wool. The ridges of dark, metamorphic and trap-like rocks in the distance, rise but little above the valley, the highest in sight being 18,152 feet above the level of the sea. As everywhere at great elevations, so also here, the sky shows a dark tint, but this reddish veil along the horizon is peculiar to the plateaux separating the chains of the Karakorum and the Kuenlun regions, where extreme dryness, vast sandy deserts, and the powerful influence of the sun's rays on the ground, combine to increase the quantity of solid matter suspended in the atmosphere. The whitish whirlpools near the rocks also show the river to flow downwards from the observer. The Yabagur is *Myrica germanica* var. *orientalis*.