JOURNEY

OF

THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY

THROUGH

AFGHÁNISTÁN AND THE KHANATE OF BUKHÁRA

IN

1878—1879.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF A MEMBER OF THE MISSION,

DOCTOR I. L. YAVORSKI,
MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

ABRIDGED TRANSLATION.

Translated in the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department in India:
VOLUME I.—BY MAJOR E. R. ELLES, R. A., ASSISTANT QUARTERMASTER GENERAL.
VOLUME II.—BY MAJOR W. E. GOWAN, GENERAL LIST INFANTRY.

1885.

WITH SKETCH OF THE BÁMIÁN IDOLS AND RECONNAISSANCE SKETCH OF THE ROUTE OF THE MISSION.

ORIGINAL PUBLISHED AT St. PETERSBURG, 1882.

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JOURNEY

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IN

1878—1879.

CHAPTER I.

TÁSHKAND—SAMARKAND.

Táshkand in the month of May 1878—Preparations for a campaign to India—Equipment of the Russian Mission to Kábul—Circumstances under which this equipment was carried out—Composition of the Mission—Preparations for Departure from Táshkand—Route from Táshkand to Samarkand—Assembly of the Mission at Samarkand.

In the month of May 1878 more remarkable animation reigned amongst the Táshkand community than had ever existed before.

Preparations were being made for a campaign into India. The order had been given to the troops of the Turkistán district to form three detachments, which were to advance at no distant period to the southern frontier of the district.

The whole fighting element of Turkistán had just woke up from a long slumber, and was bestirring itself. Rapid work was going on in equipping transport, field hospitals, sanitary detachments; in purchase of horses, means of transport, and all other field gear. The persons entrusted with the supply of the troops had scattered on all sides over the steppe, purchasing horses and hiring "arabas" (native two-wheeled carts). Officers wore a very cheerful appearance, just as if they had been given something. Everywhere over their cups they could be heard expressing the greatest satisfaction at the prospect of the coming campaign.

"What a fearful thing it is to have always to stick in one and the self-same place. Wherever one looks, everything is familiar, and has been noticed long ago. What a different thing it is to have a campaign. The wind of the open steppe blows round one, and one has one's fill of fresh air. Thanks to the English, we shall be delivered from this, and wherever one looks one will not always see the same sight, thank God. Never to take a step anywhere or for anything, but to stay here rotting in Táshkand. Now it is all changed. Now, we are going to India, to drive the English from thence. If it were a campaign against the Chinese now; the latter would never fight with us; they run away, and you can't overtake them."

Such were the speeches which one might constantly hear among the groups of officers collected at different places. Many tried to guess who would go with the first columns. All wished to go first. For the first to go there would be the first action and the first rewards. It must be understood that no one even thought of want of success; the officers of Turkistán know nothing of it; they have never had any unsuccessful affairs. However, some sceptics were found amongst them who suggested the possibility of failure. The greater portion rejoiced and rubbed their hands beforehand in anticipation of receiving outfit allowance, field allowance, and increased rations.

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Even the soldiers, as it were, were rejoicing; warlike songs were oftener heard; their walk became brisker. This fact, however, might be explainable on purely physiological grounds. Several days before this the order had been given to increase the rations of the troops intended for the campaign.

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It was only the married soldiers, and especially those who had children, who became somewhat pensive. All the same they did not wish to show it; so took courage and even attempted to rally the young soldiers, who rather resembled village flaneurs. Turkistán campaigns have never been accompanied by any considerable losses in the ranks, and the loss from the enemy's fire has always been very trifling. One must, however, notice that even here, amongst the soldiers, there were sceptics. The greater part of these, though, had a very confused idea of the coming campaign. Some said they were going to fight the Chinese, who had dared to challenge the Russian power; others said that the Turkumáns had revolted, and so they were going to put them down. But there were some who, catching some phrases of the officers' conversation, said that this was quite another campaign—a more distant and more difficult one.

The talk amongst the Táshkand public was of quite a different character. They were unfavourable to any campaign whatever, more especially a distant one. The year 1875 was remembered by all here, when the town from day to day awaited an attack by the native Sarts on the European quarter of Táshkand. The effective number of troops in the town was then very small, owing to military operations in the Khanate of Kokán. Owing to this, arms were issued to all the peaceable inhabitants; rules were established as if for a siege, and an order was also given that, at a certain signal, all Russian inhabitants were to collect in the citadel of the town. A panic almost reigned in the town. The Sarts showed themselves to be very indifferent raiders; but there were some cases of robbery. And now the Russian inhabitants again feared the return of this not altogether "good," or altogether "old" time. We may assume that there would have now remained in Táshkand the local battalion and two newly-formed reserve companies; but the public considered that for the complete security of the town this was insufficient. Many ladies thought of leaving for Russia, as European Russia is here called. Others, giving vent really to their own wishes, said, with the air and tone of prophetesses that there would be no campaign and that it was all nonsense.

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The ladies of the Red Cross Society and others not belonging to it in a short time prepared a whole load of various hospital and bandaging requirements intended for the future wounded heroes.

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The Táshkand hospital was not behindhand in the general stir. The work of forming a field hospital for the main detachment went on; medical officers were told off to it for duty, amongst whom I found myself! To speak frankly, I and the greater part of the officers wished for a campaign, and as soon as one was settled on, I only thought of one thing, and that was how I should manage not to be left in Táshkand, for that fate seemed worse to me than death.

What! All go on a campaign and I remain behind! They are going —where are they going—to India! And I must stick in this wretched Táshkand. Now I only came to the Turkistán district before the Turkish war because a movement on India was proposed, for even then it was remarked that England would commence to injure us everywhere, and that we should have to fight her.

* * * * * *

About this time the report became pretty generally spread in the town that General Stolietov, the well-known defender of the Shipka, had been appointed to the district. They said that he had lived a long time amongst a Musulman population, had passed several years in the Caucasus, and had been in Persia; that he had lived some time in Krasnovodsk, and had carried out the survey of the lower course of the Amú-Darya; was well acquainted with Asiatic languages, and, in general, possessed many qualities especially valuable for the coming expedition. So they said that he had been appointed to the district to carry out the Indian campaign. It was not even mentioned that it had been decided to send a Russian Mission to Afghánistán; no one said a word about it.

One fine evening, the 24th May 1878 (5th June), I received a note from the Secretary to the District Medical Administrative Officer. The note informed me that I was required at once by the District Medical Director. Outside the note was written "very urgent."

I present myself and learn what no one expected, *viz.*, that a Mission is being formed for Afghánistán. The Chief of the Mission was General Stolietov. The District Inspector offered me the post of medical officer to the Mission. The matter was very urgent. I hastened to present myself to my new and wholly unexpected Chief.

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I had never seen General Stolietov before. Having formed my conception of him from the newspapers, I expected to see a bold, seasoned warrior of almost Titanic figure. But I was much astonished at seeing before me a man of small stature, weak physique, with gentle manners and a soft voice. His voice especially made a great impression on me.

I presented myself, and the General at once spoke of the coming journey into Afghánistán; he said that it would be necessary to hurry greatly, that, owing to illness, he had been delayed in Moscow, and then enlarged on his injured hand, which still bore the traces of having been inflamed. The General ended by advising me to go from Táshkand to Samarkand, the point of assembly of the members of the Mission, the very next day.

The whole day I was at fever heat. I had to arrange my affairs, equip my field medicine chest. It was necessary finally to get money, although it seems to me I should have begun with the last. But, however much I tried, I could not start the next day, as for one thing the pay assigned to the members of the Mission not been yet received from the Divisional Treasury.

The allowance given was by no means lavish. The five superior officers on the staff of the Mission received 200 roubles travelling allowance (£31-13-4), and 3 roubles a day, paid in advance for two months. This was all. Any one can see that the allowance given was insufficient, if I give some of the items of expenditure.

Owing to the mobilisation the prices of all camp requisites had greatly risen. For instance, before a pair of travelling boxes could be purchased for 10 to 12 roubles (31/8 to 38 shillings); now the price had risen to from 20 to 25 (63/4 to 79/2 shillings), and the quality was worse. Before the campaign a very fair riding horse cost 40 to 50 roubles (£6-6-2 to £7-18-4); now the price for comparatively poor horses was 80, 90, or 100 roubles. Supposing I bought two horses, one for riding and one for baggage, and a pair of travelling trunks, there was the whole of the outfit allowance expended. Then for one's servant, for one could not do without one, one had to buy a long-eared charger in the shape of a donkey. Now, how were the other requisites for the route to be purchased—stores of the necessary provisions, &c.? We were going into a country of which we only knew that one phrase, learnt long before in Obalovski's Geography, that "Afghánistán is inhabited by predatory tribes; the chief towns are Kábul and Herát." I know that some of the members of the Mission, owing to their want of knowledge of the country took with them about a púd (36 lbs.) of biscuits and more or less considerable stores of sugar, tea, and other provisions. What was worst of all, not one of us knew what to take and what not to take.

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However, I had to equip myself, poorly though it might be, and when I started from Samarkand for Kábul, I had nothing left in my pocket out of my daily allowance paid two months in advance but a few score "tengi." *

How I should have fed myself on the road if it had not been for the hospitality of the Amír of Bukhára in Bukháran territory and of the Amír of Afghánistán in Afghán territory—Allah alone knows.

The news of the despatch of the Mission to Kábul at once flew all over Táshkand. I was overwhelmed by officers of my acquaintance with questions, cross-questions, jokes, witticisms, good wishes and various remarks relative to the coming journey. All were somehow convinced that the Mission would meet nearly the whole English army in Kábul. Many advanced the opinion that the Mission would not see Kábul; that the Afghán Amír was on the best of terms with the English and would not receive it. Some promised us all kinds of woes from the robber Afghán nation, but added to this, lest the Mission should feel timid, that the brave army of Turkistán would follow us, and, in the event of anything happening, they would deliver us.

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* "Tenga," Bukhára silver coin worth about 7½*d.* nominal value.

On the 26th May (7th June) the whole Mission, in its full strength, presented itself to the Governor-General of Turkistán. The composition of the Mission was as follows:—

Head of the Mission—Major-General Stolietov; as his assistant was appointed Colonel (now Major-General) N. O. Razgonov; the topographer of the Mission was N. A. Benderski; Persian Interpreter, Sub-Lieutenant Nasirov; Interpretor of the Turki dialects, Zamán-Beg-Shaikh Ali Begov; "Chinovnik*"-Malevinski was attached to the Mission for his knowledge of Western European languages, especially English. I, as the reader knows, was appointed doctor. At Samarkand an escort of twenty-two Cossacks had already been given to the Mission, belonging to the Ural and Orenburg troops. Twenty-two whole Cossacks! and is it not a fact that the escort of the English Mission, who, after the example of the Russian Mission poked their noses into Kábul amounted to 2,000 men (followers and escort). Amongst the escort there was even artillery.

On the same day, *viz.*, the 26th May (7th June), I rode from Táskhand towards Samarkand, and the next day at 6 A.M. I found myself on the Chapan-ata heights commanding the town and surrounding locality.

The route from Táskhand to Samarkand has been so often described, and in so many ways, that there remains hardly anything new for me to say of it. But I will say just a few words. From Táskhand to Chináz there is nothing particular about the road. The latter place is a muddy little town at all times of the year, and overgrown with high grass.

From Chináz to Jizák (the same kind of town and one of the most favourite abodes of that Central Asian plague the "rishta†") the steppe road is in no way remarkable. But this level steppe, extending in every direction beyond the limit of vision, leads the traveller to make some reflections. The fertile soil is suitable for growing a vast amount of all the possible herbs and trees which grow in this region. A numerous population could live happily on this vast territory (about 10,000 square versts=4,444 square miles about). Nevertheless one does not meet on the road with one habitation or a single hamlet. Occasionally one sees a few wretched "kibitkas" of the Nomads, dotted here and there at a distance from the road. It only does not possess that one trifle to make the country flourish like a garden, and that is water. The fact is that throughout the whole distance from Chináz to Jizák, more than 100 versts (66 miles) there are only four or five wells where water can with difficulty be obtained, half-mud and loathsome to the taste. This is why this rich mould land is inhabited only by creeping things of various kinds; this is the reason why this extensive locality is called the "Hungry Steppe." But there was probably a time when this locality was like a garden, rich in population and the gifts of nature. Scarcely perceptible traces of irrigation canals, intersecting the steppe in various directions, lead the traveller to this conclusion. There is no doubt that water used to flow in them—that elixir of life for Central Asian wastes. Involuntarily the thought arises as to when this was the case. How long is it since this rich soil began to be a desert?

* "Chinovnik" title of an official.

† Tape-worm.

But there is probably no one in a position to answer this question. The historians of Alexander of Macedon even describe this locality as a waterless desert. The Chinese traveller Suan-Shan in the seventh century A.D. also describes this tract as a desert. And after that the Arabian geographers and travellers also speak of this desert as completely waterless. The memory of the people has retained no tradition of the time when this land flourished. But at the present moment the embers of vitality are again bursting into a glow. The Turkistán government has found it practicable to irrigate this rich soil, and for several years thousands of natives have been working at a grand canal, intended to bring this dead locality to life again. If only the project is realised and the steppe intersected with irrigation canals, the whole locality will be quickly inhabited, and it will become the future granary, not only of Russian Turkistán, but of the whole of Central Asia. The irrigation and populating of this steppe in connection with the introduction of a railway in the Turkistán province will be likely to produce a great change in the economy of Central Asia. We may assume that this result will only be attained when all, or if not all, the greater part of the steppe has received water. The canal from the Sir-Darya, from which they wish to bring water, will require a large mass of water to irrigate this enormous tract. The Sir-Darya, however, can furnish this amount of water, although by doing so its navigability will suffer considerably in consequence of the shallowness of its waters increasing. And there is nothing to grieve over in this. The navigation of the Sir-Darya will be of almost no use to the country in its future aspect, and will only add to the burden of its budget by the expense of keeping up the steamers and vessels of the flotilla, which are fit for nothing. It is in the highest degree desirable that the main irrigation canal should be rapidly finished, for, I repeat, the irrigation of the "Hungry Steppe" will have an enormous influence on the future, not only of the Turkistán province, but of Russia in Central Asia generally.

But at the present time this steppe is not so miserably bare as when I rode over it in the end of May; in the early spring, in March, it forms a luxurious meadow, covered with a thick coating of vegetation.

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At length I am beyond Jizák. Before me appears the well-known defile "The gates of Tamerlane." The grand posts of these "gates" are formed of rocks descending precipitously to the stream, several hundred feet in height. On an overhanging lofty rock, on the right side of the defile, about 35 feet from the ground is the following inscription cut out in Persian characters: "Let all those who traverse deserts or travel by land and sea know that in the year 979 an engagement took place here between the army of the representative of the caliph, the shadow of the Almighty, the great Khán Abdulla Khán,* the son of Iskandar Khán, with 30,000 fighting-men and the army of Darvish Khán and Baba-Khán and their sons. This army consisted of 50,000 men, relations of the Sultáns, and 400,000 men in the ranks, in all, from Turkistán, Táshkand, Ferghána, and Dasht-i-Kipchak. The army of the possessor of the auspicious conjunction of the stars obtained the victory. Having conquered the Sultáns mentioned, he put so many of their army to death, that, owing

* Abdulla Khán, one of the best representatives of the Shaibanide dynasty, ruled over Bukhára in the first half of the sixteenth century (born 1538; died 1597).

to the people killed in battle and as prisoners, blood flowed on the surface of the waters of the River Jizáki (Jalán-uta) during the course of a month. Let this be known."

Above this inscription is another, also in the Persian language:—

"By the help of the Lord Almighty, the great Sultán, the subduer of kings and nations, the shadow of God upon earth, the supporter of the ordinances of the Sunni faith and the law of God, Lord, defender of the faith, Ulúg-Beg Gurugán, (may God prolong his reign and rule!) undertook a campaign into the country of the Jetis and Mongols and returned uninjured from that people into these lands in the year 828."

The more nearly you approach Samarkand, the more clearly and clearly do the snowy summits of the Turkistán and Zarafshán mountain ranges rise on the south-eastern horizon.

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You find yourself at the second station from the capital of the Asiatic conqueror, Tamerlane. This station is called "Kameni Most," or the "Stone Bridge." A few versts from here commences the cultivated valley of Zarafshán, the "gold-scatterer"* of Central Asia. From a distance this verdant, endless garden, as the valley appears to be, delights one with its luxurious vegetation; but when you ride into it, it turns out to be marsh; round it are gardens, mingled with irrigated fields; everywhere there is water, and where there is none it is very muddy and damp. But, nevertheless, you ride along an excellent metalled road; this chaussée extends right up to Samarkand 30 versts (20 miles). Gradually, with each step in advance, you begin to distinguish a deep roar, like that of a waterfall; in a short time you reach the bank of the "gold-giving" river, and its roar deafens you.

Now, you have to take a short ride in a cart through the water, which is running with the speed of an arrow shot from a bow. There are no bridges on the river. The level of the water, however, was so high that one could not cross in the ordinary post-cart if one did not wish to swim in it. Then your baggage has to be removed from the post-cart to an araba; the huge diameter of the wheels being most suitable for the work. You complete your change and launch into the river waves, which break furiously under the araba. You expect that the araba will be upset somewhere by the strong flow of water, and then you may pray for your baggage and for yourself also. The water is sometimes so deep that the horses drawing the araba are quite immersed in it, but the native driver has lived all his life at this occupation, and is so experienced at his work that you may confidently entrust the guidance of this original ferry-boat into his hands; a mounted man, too, goes in front to show the road. You have to cross several branches of the river spread over a distance of 2 versts in this manner.

On the opposite side of the river one is surprised to see the remains of a stone bridge which once existed. Two complete arches rise high up, bearing witness to the durability of construction, and to the art of the men, who at some unknown period built this bridge. It is unlikely that the Samarkand of the present time will expect a bridge to be soon made, and in all probability both voluntary and involuntary tourists and the inhabitants will yet for a long time take advantage of the suitable

* Literal translation of Zarafshán.

diameter of the araba wheel for crossing the river. In front of you is the ascent of a hill. This hill—Chapan-átá—is where on the 1st May 1868 the Amír of Bukhára, Muzafar Khán, was routed by the Turkistán troops which attacked him. You ascend the hill, and before you opens out one of the most beautiful views in Central Asia.

It was not in vain that this place was the favourite station of the great Asiatic—Tamerlane. Samarkand, with its noble monuments, lies before you as if in the palm of your hand, and beyond it and around it extends, as far as the eye can see, the magnificent verdant valley of Zarafshán. Still further beyond, the mountains in some places, and especially towards the east, surround the plain in a huge belt; their snowy summits rise loftily and proudly. Another ruler, who, although not so celebrated as Timur, was probably not less æsthetic, *viz.*, Sultán Báber, in comparing Samarkand with other places in the world then known, gives the palm of superiority to it. You drive through a wood of gardens, ascend and descend hills several times, and then, making a final descent, come face to face with the celebrated buildings of Timur, colleges and mosques. A numerous variegated crowd hums at your feet; and you find yourself in the central bazar of Samarkand.

The Kirghiz driver now drives his horses very zealously, wishing to show off his skill before the natives, and the horses gallop until the walls and bastions of the citadel appear in view. The horses then move on at a walk and you enter the Russian town.

On entering the town a broad street catches your eye, the so-called Abramovski Boulevard. The width of this street, with the boulevard in the centre, planted with trees, is 50 sajénes (350 feet). Russian Samarkand surprises you with the regularity and breadth of its streets, but also with their emptiness, as well as the superfluous abundance of dust, which lies in a thick layer over the streets, pavements, and trees.

The streets here, contrary to the custom at Táshkand, are seldom watered. But here at last is the wished-for station-house. Let us enter it.

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On the following day I had to finally prepare for the road. To remain longer in the station-house was inconvenient, and in the town there was only one hotel, which was full; so it was necessary to look out for a private house. For 60 kopecks (1*s.* 11*d.*) a day I hired a whole house, but of course unfurnished. Here I had to sleep still on the travelling boxes* put together. Now, I will say a few words about these and about transport generally.

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First of all I had to purchase horses. I was equipping myself for a march for the first time in my life, and had only commenced to ride in Táshkand less than a year before, and knew little more about a horse than I did about Chinese grammar. Consequently, the selection of horses was a difficult matter for me.

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I, however, was rather successful in purchasing my horses. Two of them (I purchased three altogether, for my servant excused himself from

* Mule or camel trunks, *yakdans.*—*Translator.*

† Description quite unnecessary.—*Translator.*

the pleasure of riding on an ass) made the whole journey to Kábul and back without any hitch. One horse, a large hill Kirghiz pacer, possessed some excellent qualities, strength, good feet, and an unusually fast amble.

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On returning home from the hospital I met an assistant surgeon appointed as my assistant who had just arrived from Táshkand. He brought with him the medicine chest, equipped for the Mission. We were obliged to repack or stow away the medical stores in the "yakdans," and this packing required great foresight and caution. Many of the medicines were liquid, and in the usual thin-sided glass bottles. There were also strong acids, also in glass bottles, and finally there was a stock of empty glass bottles. The least carelessness in packing might cause the complete, or more or less considerable, destruction of the medical stores.

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At this time General Stolietov gave over to me a mercurial barometer and a thermometer (*Tselsi's*). It was necessary to pack these instruments well. I took them with me in order to carry out meteorological observations better. The Commander of the Mission presumed that in Afghánistán it would be impossible to carry on openly either a sketch of the route or meteorological observations. In this respect we all remembered the case of Messrs. Prejevalski and Kuropatkin during their travels in Kashgár. Their observations had to be made by stealth, in view of the decided opposition of the local native authorities to carrying out any such observations. We expected the same opposition from the Afghán authorities. The reason why I offered General Stolietov my services to carry them was that, here in Central Asia, a doctor can do what is impossible for any other Europeans, surrounded as he is, in the eyes of the natives, by a kind of aureole of ommipotence. This is why I thought that I might carry out observations, explaining that they were merely required for my art. The results justified my anticipations to some extent.

Whilst these preparations were going on, nearly all the Mission collected in Samarkand. Colonel Razgonov alone was still absent; the Mission had been quite ready to start for two days, but he had not yet arrived; he only came on the 1st June (13th June).

Samarkand—Russian be it understood—has only existed for ten years, and, to look at, it is quite a European town; it has a general assembly room, a female school, and even a town dispensary, where medicines are given gratis to the poor natives. Few district towns in European Russia possess similar institutions.

CHAPTER II.

SAMARKAND—KÁRSHI.

From Samarkand to Jám—General description of the locality—From Jam to Chirákchi—Bukhárán hospitality—Journey to Kárshi—Life of the Mission at Kárshi—Audience given to the Mission by the Amir of Bukhára, Sayad Muzaffar-ud-din Khán—Bukháran amusements—Baths—French Philippe.

On the 2nd June (14th June) at 12 noon, the Mission collected in full strength at the house of General Iványov.

The extensive court in front of the house was blocked with baggage and riding animals, and heaps of things lay about ready for loading. Several natives, screaming their loudest, were busy round an obstinate, timid horse, which would not let itself be loaded; it kicked, trembling all over at the sight of an enormous tent, which they wanted to get on to its back; at last, they threw a horse-cloth over its head, and the thing was done. The servants were looking after their masters' horses and loads, and employed themselves in profound expressions of opinion as to which horse would stand the march best, which was the youngest, fastest, &c. This caused a rather lively argument amongst them.

Two dozen Cossacks were grouped at the gate. The bold sergeant, with a strongly developed growth of hair on his face, produced a great impression with his rough seasoned appearance. On his breast hung a whole bunch of "Georges,"* and several medals. The Cossacks, too, were all picked men—tall, bold, and with that seasoned appearance which a steppe life, full of all kinds of adventures, alone can give a man. Harder than all worked and screamed, whilst loading the horses, the Caravan-báshi of the baggage train, Rajab Ali. His figure stood out clearly amongst the native Jigits† and La-úchis (drivers). His great stature, thick sinewy neck, and strongly developed muscles made one presume that he possessed strength and energy, such as is rarely met with amongst native Tájiks. His very swarthy, expressive face, black glittering eyes, and aquiline nose made one doubt his belonging to any of the Turki races inhabiting Turkistán. He was, in fact, a foreigner to the country, being an Afghán. Afterwards, whilst the Mission was travelling to Kábul, we recognised his many valuable qualities. His appointment as Caravan-báshi of the baggage train was the most happy one possible. He had traversed Central Asia several times in various directions; had been several times to India; had been born in Kábul, which he had visited as lately as 1877 in the capacity of

* Cross of St. George, given for valour.

† "*Jigit*," a mounted native used for different duties by the Russian Government. *Láüchi*, natives who drive baggage animals, camels, horses, &c. *Caravan-bashi* is a native who superintends the movement of the baggage train; he thus considers himself the immediate commander of the native followers of the caravan.

messenger to the Amír Shír Ali, to whom he took a letter from the Governor General of Turkistán.

He was now a "Jigit" at the orders of the Commander of the Samarkand Division. He could speak freely in three languages—Afghán (Pushtu), Turki, and Persian. It was a pity he did not know how to read and write Russian. All the members of the Mission assembled in the office of General Iványov, exchanging remarks on the forthcoming journey. Finally, General Iványov spoke a few inspiriting good wishes to us, and the Mission went out to mount their horses. In a few minutes a long line of riders extended along the street, with a long tail of baggage animals. The court was completely emptied. A few of the local authorities accompanied the Mission for a distance of some versts.

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We had a long ride, turning from side to side, through the winding dusty streets, but gradually they became more deserted, the trees rarer, and we finally issued from the town. The town ended, the gardens which surrounded it in a ring, also ended, and the desert steppe met our gaze, with its ragged clothing, consisting only of thorn bushes burnt up by the sun. After this there was no dust, but the steppe wind blew on us like a flame and continued to blow the whole day with its fiery breath.

We rode in the direction of Jám. The following was the route of our journey. Up to the Bukhára frontier we were to move on Jám, and then to go to Kárshi. After this, passing through Guzar and Shirábád, the Mission would have to reach one of the points of passage on the Amú-Darya. This route was considerably longer than that first proposed through Shahr-i-Sabz. It was, however, necessary to make this détour because at that time the Amír of Bukhára was in the town of Kárshi, and it was most probably necessary for the Commander of the Mission to see him.

So we started for Jám. At first we rode quietly, and sometimes had to halt owing to the baggage train. It appeared that the horses, purchased under loads, had up to the present time hardly ever carried them. The drivers hired for the baggage train were indifferently acquainted with transport. Owing to this the horses were badly loaded; the loads often came loose and fell off, and then had all to be made up again. After several similar halts the General washed his hands of the baggage, and, leaving a part of the Cossacks with it, went on ahead with the remainder and all the members of the Mission. The road ran over a wide steppe, running south towards the steeply rising, sharply indented, Samarkand range of mountains. These mountains are the prolongation of the massive Zarafshán mountain range, commencing in the mountain knot of Mách. In the Samarkand range there is not a single peak covered with eternal snow; the length of its longer axis is 200 to 300 versts (166 to 200 miles), and its width nowhere exceeds 30 versts (20 miles). The northern slope is not so steep as the southern; the latter rises rapidly in steep bluffs up to the highest crest line. The height of the summits of this range nowhere exceeds 7,000 or 8,000 feet, and owing to the absence of snowy summits it is very poor in water. A few rivulets alone flow from its northern spurs. The southern slope of the mountains only gives a few inconsiderable affluents to the Káshká-Darya. The

mountains are very sterile, like the steppes around them. There is hardly any wood unless you reckon some stumps of mountain "archa" (juniper) scattered about. To the north and west of these mountains extends an unlimited plain (steppe), on the surface of which are here and there, very occasionally, dotted the "yúrts" of nomad Kirghiz. The road we now traversed ran nearly parallel to the mountain range, but at the same time continually approached it; pebbles began to increase in quantity, and they were particularly numerous in the beds of the small half dried up streams. Twilight already enveloped the hills in a thick fog and filled the steppe with gloom when we approached quite close to the mouths of the stony giants. In a defile, resting on one side against the almost vertical wall of the mountains and bounded on the other side by the murmuring mountain stream, was a sort of hamlet. This hamlet was selected as our halting-place for the night, and it was quite time. When we rode into the verdure clad courtyard of the local "aksakál,"* night had already enveloped the land in its murky cloak. We feared lest the baggage which had remained behind might miss the road, and that the horses might lose their footing in crossing the stony bed of some stream; some of the Cossacks were, therefore, sent along the road to meet the baggage train.

Our 30 versts (20 miles) ride made itself felt; my knees pained me and my back ached a bit; a march of 30 versts is not a long one, no doubt, but before this I had only been in the habit of riding in excursions about the town, and it is therefore not surprising that the present march tired me. I wanted to eat and drink badly, but our baggage was not up, and one could only regret it. The *aksakál*, however, ran about, hither and thither, wishing to welcome the gentlemen visiting him, and soon produced some tea and milk. This was quickly swallowed by us. In the meantime the baggage came up, a fire was at once made, and in a few minutes the bright flames licked the blackened sides of the kettle and cooking-pot in which were quickly being prepared the daily supper. A few of the travellers waited for supper; some, of whom I was one, stretched their weary limbs on a felt, spread on the ground, and were not long in sleeping the sleep of the weary. When supper was ready, they tried to wake up the sleepers, but they would not awake. In the morning, long before sunrise, it was necessary to start again; Jám, our intended halting-place, was more than 30 versts (20 miles) from here, a five hours' ride at least; it was desirable to escape the burning heat of the day and to reach the halting-place before midday; so it was necessary to leave this halting-place as early as possible.

At about 5 A.M. the following day we were already mounted on our horses. The uniform surface of the steppes again extended before us, grown over with wild thorn and covered with pebbles. The same sterile hills, fanned by the wind and burnt up by the sun, extend along the left side of the road; the same wretched "yúrts," black and covered with dust and soot, belonging to the Nomads, are occasionally met with on the right of the road. Two or three steppe partridges rise noisily from almost under the hoofs of the horses.

But here we are in Jám.† On the maps we had with us Jám was

* Aksakál literally means "grey-beard:" the native village elders are called by this name.—*Trans.*

† The actual height of Jám is 2,050 feet, according to Larionov.

shown as a fortified place; consequently, in riding up to it I expected to see formidable ramparts with embrasures and the dark masses of guns looking out of them, but there was nothing of the kind. Jám is merely a large village, inhabited by Uzbaks; it is situated almost in the centre of a small hollow, surrounded by low hills. A small, turbid stream intersects this hollow from east to west; not far to the south of the village were seen the white tents of soldiers. For several days the 9th Line Battalion, forming the advanced guard of the main body of the Turkistán troops, had been here. Still further to the left nearer the hills, on the top of a low mound, were seen the ruins of a Buhkáran fort, which had once existed here; this was once the fortified place of Jám. This place had been appointed as the rendezvous of the whole main detachment intended to advance to the frontiers of India. We rode up to a thin group of trees, the only ones existing here, overshadowing a small muddy pond; here we found tents and yúrts already pitched for us, prepared by the hospitable commander of the 9th Battalion, N. Plotnikov. With great delight we stretched our weary limbs under the shade of the tents, and with still greater pleasure took advantage of the kind-hearted hospitality of our host. A glass of "vodka" and some smoking cutlets were exactly the thing we wanted. After a plenteous repast and moderate libations to the well-known Greek god weariness overcame us.

Here I commenced a series of observations of temperature, and continued them thencefort has carefully asw as practicable. The temperature was taken usually three timesa day—in the morning before starting, at from 5 to 7 A.M.; at midday, 12 to 2 P.M.; and in the evening, from 7 to 8 P.M. Barometrical observations were postponed until we reached Afghánistán. The route through the Bukhára territory which the Mission had to follow had been already determined barometrically throughout its whole length by former travellers—Shwartz, Larionov, and others.

It was decided by the Commander of the Mission that on the following day we should move early in the morning on Kárshi, from which we were divided by an interval of 90 versts (60 miles), of perfectly desert route. I say perfectly desert because there is an insufficiency even of water. The water which is met with *en route* has all the characteristic qualities of the water of salt steppes; it is salt and bitter. Here the steppe desert is quite uninhabited, and is composed of numerous encroachments of the neighbouring vast Turanian desert. It is, as it were, a shoal in the unlimited sandy ocean, which extends from here to the Caspian and the Ural.

We did not, however, have to experience the pleasures of that attractive locality. On the evening of this day we received messengers from the Beg (Governor of the town of Chirákchi, who was the youngest son of the Amír of Bukhára. The messengers expressed to the Commander of the Mission the great desire the Beg had to see us as guests in his town. But, in order to grant the request of the young Beg, it would be necessary to make a détour of 30 or 40 versts (20 to 26⅔ miles), as we had to incline considerably south of the former direction of the route on Kárshi; this circumstance in some degree served as an impediment towards fulfilling the Beg's request. Then, the messengers endeavoured to represent all the difficulty of the route through the desert locality between Jám and Kárshi. According to them, at that time, no forage at all for horses could be obtained on that road, and very little water. In addition, they

said that the Beg would be delighted at the visit of Russian guests, and that everything necessary was prepared along the road for the Mission. In the face of such weighty arguments it was difficult to refuse, and the Beg's invitation was accepted. On the following day we had to make a march of 60 versts (40 miles) from Jám to Chirákchi, and consequently we started before sunrise. The baggage was sent on still earlier, so that it might not delay the general movement. Two versts from Jám is the boundary between Russian and Bukháran dominions. It is marked by a small stone pillar, placed at the side of the road on the top of a low mound. On the side turned towards Russian territory are the Imperial Arms, and on the Bukhára side a Persian inscription. A strange feeling came over me when I crossed the frontier of the Empire for the first time; it was a somewhat painful sensation, just as if I had lost something, and, as a matter of fact, the traveller in crossing the frontier here in Central Asia does lose a great deal—the protection of the law, and confidence in his personal security. Here uncheerful thoughts came into my head—the frontier crossed, when would one again see one's native land, or would one do so ta all? The greater part of European travellers in Central Asia have laid their bones in this inhospitable country. Allowing that we were not simple travellers, but representatives of Government, our persons should be counted sacred, but in 1865-66 our embassy suffered several months' captivity in Bukhára, and that was only ten years ago.

In 1863 three Italians sent to Bukhára to purchase silkworms' eggs nearly lost their heads on the block, and that they were saved was only due to the interference of the Russian Government. Allowing that in Bukháran dominions Russians would meet with nothing but hospitality and most complete attention, yet we were going into Afghánistán, which was to us a *terra incognita* in the fullest sense of the word. Probably all my fellow-travellers were immersed in similar thoughts, for they were persistently silent.

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We rode for some time along the well-beaten road to Kárshi. The country became more and more of an undulating character. The Samarkand range, which had run along on our left the whole time, here turned sharply to the south and also broke up, sending only a few small hilly offshoots towards the west, which further west, after a certain distance, again rose into a rather well-defined range.

Thus, the intervening locality through which we rode forms, as it were, the natural gates from the Zarafshán valley into the Kárshi oasis, and it was owing to this that there used to be a Bukháran fort here, also serving the purpose of an exile convict prison for native criminals. It may be from this that the name of the fort is derived, for, if I am not mistaken, the name Jám means in the native language "hell."

The country became more and more undulating. We soon turned off from the Kárshi road towards Chirákchi in a south-east direction. We had to make two or three rather steep ascents in clayey-shale soil. Here there was no road. We went along a mountain path, winding round the shoulder of hills, sown in places with corn. Wheeled transport, however, would not meet with any very considerable difficulties to movement. Here a mounted Bukháran rode up to the Commander of the Mission, spoke to him about something, and flew back like an arrow, turning to

the left, down the steep bank of a deep ravine. The whole cavalcade turned after him.

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The Beg's messengers had thought that this would not be a bad place for us to fortify ourselves with breakfast for the long day's march; consequently, about 2 versts from the turn (*i.e.*, from Kárshi road) they had pitched tents beforehand and prepared breakfast. Within 15 minutes we reached the very steep descent into the ravine. On the opposite sloping bank were seen the variegated Bukhára tents pitched under the shade of an apricot grove. Here and there were piles of baggage and groups of Cossacks, walking about round their horses. The Bukháran attendants brought "samavars" and food. The green and shade of the apricot trees promised us a pleasant rest, and the smoking dishes an ample breakfast. From this time the Mission was entertained at the expense of the Amír of Bukhára. The Bukhárans would have considered it a great insult if we had refused their food and supplies, and had thought of feeding ourselves at our own expense. The repast was, ample though one cannot say that it was equally well prepared. Greasy dishes, in the form of the inevitable Asiatic "pilau," are not very palatable to the European stomach. However, we soon got accustomed to Bukháran cooking. The sun was pretty high, and was copiously bathing the soft outlines of the hills with its warm golden rays, when our caravan again started. The hills and rising ground gradually died away; the surrounding steppe was flat, uniform, and, one might say, lifeless. if there had not been visible along the sides of the road occasional "yúrts," that primitive dwelling of the not less primitive inhabitants, the local nomad Kirghiz; there were also some scanty corn-fields, like new little patches, on the worn-out garb of the steppe.

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Round about for many a verst there was not a drop of water, and yet, if any one of the travellers gave the least hint that he wanted to drink, water was produced in abundance. Besides water the Bukhárans carried with them a supply of sour milk, like "airán" and "kátík;" in a word, their kind attention was shown here in a striking manner. About 1 P.M. the hospitable shade of the tents again received us for a time, and gave us a rest from the burning rays of the sun, which were at 40°.* It appeared that these were the same tents and yúrts which served for our morning halt, for, as soon as they were clear of their morning guests, they were sent on by mounted Bukhárans to this place.

It was 4 in the afternoon, and the wearisome journey would soon be over. A dark mass of green at last appeared on the southern horizon, which seemed to increase more and more as one approached it. Here glimmered a river, winding in a dark blue line through the gardens, getting gradually paler, as it were dying out, as it flowed on further into the steppe. Before us was the town of Chirákchi.† On the right and left of the road extended mud enclosures burnt with the sun. A group of mounted Bukhárans were crowded on the nearest vacant space awaiting the Mission. This was the ceremonial party sent to

* Presumably centigrade=104.°

† The height of the town of Chirákchi above the level of sea is 1,340 feet, according to Shwartz

receive us by the Beg from the town. The usual compliments and good wishes followed. Then we had to cross the river Káshká-Darya by a ford, as there is no bridge or even ferry over it. Its depth reached 5 feet, breadth 20 or 30 sajénes (140 feet to 210 feet). We crossed successfully, but the baggage had to be unloaded from the horses and placed in the same kind of arabas which were used at the passage of the Zarafshán at Samarkand, lest they should be wetted in the river. Now (*i.e.*, in the beginning of June) the river was comparatively shallow, as the snows in the mountains had not melted much as yet. The highest level of the river is in July and August, when the heights of Hazrat Sultán, where this river rises, are stripped of the greater part of their snows. On the opposite and precipitous bank of the river a building, like a square citadel, first caught our eye, surrounded by lofty, crenelated earthen walls. This was the "palace" of the Beg, allotted for the time as a residence for the Mission. When we entered it, the four-sided earthen quadrangle proved to be an extensive house, divided into several smaller ones, situated concentrically; in the inner little house were several living rooms, which were occupied by us.

The first impression produced on us by the Beg's palace was not one of envy; the interior decoration of the building was still more unenviable. The bare, even unplastered, walls of the little rooms, which were, as it were, let into the wall of the court, offended the eye by their wretchedness. A few wooden stakes, knocked into the wall served, instead of clothes' pegs, for hanging clothes and other house-things upon. Along the sides by the walls were placed in a row some native, broad beds covered with some wadded quilts and mattresses. In the centre of one of the rooms was a dilapidated table, and round it some roughly made chairs, covered with red fustian. This was all the furniture of the Beg's residence. To this I may add that in no one of the numerous houses of this extensive building was there a single pane of glass to be seen; all the windows were of wood, folding, and without a piece of glass, and they also served, when opened, in place of doors. In one corner of the house was pitched a canopy of Persian shawls, and the earthen floor was spread with cheap native carpets, called by the natives "palás." Hardly had we entered the house when we were met by the Beg's courtiers with the "Mír-Akhor" at their head, who generally plays the part of chief house-builder, both at the courts of the Mirs, as well as with the Amír himself. It must be noticed that in Bukhára every Beg (and their number is almost equal to that of the towns in the Bukháran dominions) looks upon himself as an independent prince. They rule their district almost independently of the Amír; and their will is law within it. Each one has his court, though of rather microscopic dimensions, but with the same gradation of offices and duties as at the great court of the Amír. The Begs are appointed in order that they should rule over the districts entrusted to them, but all their government usually consists in collecting taxes for the Amír's treasury and for their own maintenance. The revenue is usually collected from the population in kind, and the Beg also sends it to the Amír in kind—so many robes, so many horses, so many *batmáns* (sacks from 289 to 598 lb. weight) of grain, &c. The position of Beg is not hereditary; at any time the Amír can take the Begship from one person, and give it to another, which is not seldom done by the suspicious rulers of Bukhára. At the death of the Beg all

his property goes into the treasury of the Amír, so that the heir at the death of his father receives hardly anything. As the sons of the Begs, however, must be always in the service of the Amír, they soon get into office and often themselves become Begs, and consequently the loss of succession to their father's office is not so much felt by them. Every one of them who is in the Amír's service or receives his "large pay," or becomes the Beg of some district, has enough to live upon excellently according to the Bukháran standard. In Bukhára service to the State is continued until death; there is no retirement after a service of a certain period of years. Once appointed Beg of a town, a man stops in it, shuts himself up with his harem in his palace,—which is often like a redoubt,—and never goes out. This sedentary life has become a habit, sanctioned by time and by his predecessors. Only once or twice a year does a Beg leave his warm nest in order, at the command of the Amír, to go and make his obeisance to his great master. Besides this the Beg sends to the Amír the revenue obtained from his district. He remains in Bukhára, or whatever other town the Amír happens to be in, only a few days or as long as the Amír orders him. As a rule, the Beg, when he takes his departure receives from the Amír various presents, chiefly robes of honour, as a token that the Amír is pleased with his service. It, however, sometimes happens that the Beg on arrival disappears into the subterranean casemates of the "Arg"* (palace), or they polish him off sharp, cutting his throat like a sheep. The father of the present Amír, Nasir-ulla Khán, has not rarely practised this method of quelling, in suspected Begships, a revolt considered probable by his diseased imagination. But, notwithstanding this means of repression, he had several Begs who enjoyed such wide independence that they only nominally recognised the suzerainty of the Amír. They carried on war with their neighbours, made peace, coined their own money, and only showed their dependence to Bukhára by sending the Amír from time to time some insignificant presents. The following Begs enjoyed this independence: Shahr-i-Sabz (1870); Hissár (to 1875); Kárategin and Koláb (to 1877).

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After this the Mír Akhor busied himself with our repast. The inevitable repast in Central Asia of "bitter tea" (*chai-talkh*) was already ready. The tea here is nothing but green tea brought from India. It is called "*talkh*" when drunk without sugar; with sugar it is called sweet tea (*chai-shirin*). The Central Asians are very fond of the so-called "*shir-chai*" (milk tea); they make it of brick-tea, boiled with milk, grease, salt, and other condiments. They often put spices into it—cinnamon, cloves, &c. If one can say nothing good about the taste of this beverage, one cannot but speak to its nourishing qualities. Besides tea, there were a number of other beverages, courses, and sweets.

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All this constituted the so-called "dastarkhwan" of the Bukhárans; *dastarkhwan* is really "the surface on which a repast is spread," and from this the repast itself has come to be called a "dastarkhwan."

In the room it was suffocatingly hot, the walls, baked by the sun, turned the house into a steam-bath. Perspiration poured from every pore, and each one of us involuntarily had recourse to his handkerchief. But, as soon as this movement was observed by the attendant Bukhárans,

some of them at once seized the fans and began to use them with such a will that they produced a noticeable movement of the air. At first it was impossible to keep from bursting out laughing at these fanners, but afterwards we quietly enjoyed the coolness produced by them.

Just as we wished to stretch our limbs, wearied by the long march, on the couches prepared for us, the Mír Akhor informed us that our host, the Beg of Chirákchi, would visit us directly. We had again to put on our backs our dusty coats and on our feet our sun-baked boots. In a few minutes the Beg rode into the court on a fiery, well-bred horse, covered with brocaded horse furniture; the bridle was embroidered with turquoise. He was quickly removed from his horse by the dozen hands of his suite rather than left to dismount by himself.

The Beg, one of the many sons of the Amír of Bukhára, was still very young, at the most 18 years of age. His face, beaming with health, was very handsome, but, sad to say, bore the marks of want of intelligence. His great black eyes stupidly, and, as it were, timorously, looked out from under his thick, arched, and dark eyebrows. His features still bore the character of childish immaturity; he had no signs of a beard or moustache.

Having greeted the Mission he sat down on a chair and was apparently not at his ease. The General, who could express himself clearly in Turki and Persian, endeavoured to occupy his attention, but the answers and questions of the young Beg were generally monosyllabic and in their intonation resembled orders. At every word he looked at his Mahram-báshi* as if to ask whether he ought to speak or not. It seemed to me that the Mahram-báshi slightly bent his head as if answering the Beg's silent question. The prince wished to see a Berdan rifle with which the Cossack escort of the Mission were armed. Then the Cossacks went through the rifle exercises and showed some sword-play.

It began to get very hot, and the Beg, having received a robe of honour and a silver watch from the General, went home, apparently pleased with all he had seen. On the arrival and departure of the Beg some of his suite raised some wild cries like howls or lamentations. On my asking what these signified, I was told that by these cries they give notice that a member of the royal family is passing.

A few minutes afterwards the Beg sent his present to the Mission, consisting of seven horses, with sets of brocaded and velvet horse-furniture; some of which had bridles ornamented with turquoises. Besides this he sent seven bundles of "khilats," amongst which were brocade, shawls, silk, &c. We also noticed that the number seven was kept to, even in trifles, like seven boxes of sugar, seven boxes of sugarcandy, &c. It was evident that all this was calculated for seven members of the Mission. Although presents like this have no meaning for us Russians,—for what use are these "khilats" when one cannot wear them?—yet it is impossible to refuse them. You cannot offer a greater insult to a Central Asian than to refuse his gifts. The horses, although ordinary ones, would be very useful on the road; but the Bukhárans, in common with other Central Asians, do not give away good horses; the Amír of Bukhára

* *Mahram-báshi* is a person playing the part of nurse and elder companion in the amusements and games of the Bukháran princes (and Central Asian generally).

alone sometimes presents excellent horses. The gift of "khilats" to their guests is considered by the Bukhárans as an injunction of the Korán which orders them to do everything possible for their traveller guests,—to feed them, give them drink, and also to clothe them and equip them for their further journey—an order which is incontestibly a noble and magnanimous one if it was only always and everywhere carried out, as it ought to be.

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On the next day the sun had not yet succeeded in warming up, with his oblique rays, the ground, which had cooled down during the night, when we were already in our saddles. To Kárshi we had to do about 70 versts (46⅔ miles) in 2 days.

The road now lay through cultivated country, fields sown with wheat and "jugár" (Sorghum), and in places with barley and millet. The road was from time to time intersected with *ariks* (irrigation channels), spread over the fields in a thick network. In the distance, from the green of the trees, peeped out villages and solitary huts and "yúrts." Along the road solitary mounds were met with, about which I regret to say no traditions are preserved. Here we see melon beds sown with common and water melons, for which Bukhára and Central Asia generally are so celebrated. The road along which we rode was well trodden, and it was evident that a lively traffic went on along it, and, in fact, this was the main trading route between Shahr-i-Sabz and the towns of Kárshi and Bukhára. We now pretty often met long lines of camels whose humped backs were laden with loads, varying in size and weight. Now they were loads of cotton so long as almost to trail on the ground, and here we have small, but heavy, loads of Russian cast-iron ware. Sometimes an Uzbak crosses the road with his pony laden with a *batmán* of wheat, and himself seated on the top of it, but his little horse, notwithstanding the double load, steps merrily on.

From this day the woes of our topographer commenced. Landmarks on the route were abundant; here a little village, there a mound or some ruins. It was necessary to find out what the village was called, what the ruins were, &c. Not knowing the native language, he was always obliged to turn for aid to either Nazirov or Zamán Beg. But our "trained" interpreters were not very willing to answer his questions and enquiries, and hence the commencement of his woes, which afterwards led to open strife.*

At 35 versts (23⅓ miles) from Kárshi we had to pass the extensive ruins of the town of Chim, which formerly existed here. Gigantic irrigation canals, now half filled up with mud and sand, extend in a network for many versts; huge mounds, probably the remains of the ramparts, of the former town embrace a considerable extent of steppe; the ruins of houses are spread over many square miles, and in many places mounds rise from this mass. All this proves that this place formerly teemed with the active life of a numerous population. At the present time a wretched village is all that is left of the huge town. Learned Bukhárans told me that this town was destroyed during the time of the Bukháran civil wars which took place 300 years ago. In my opinion, however, the destruction of the town can be otherwise explained. It must have been owing to the

* (Description of which follows in text).

failure of the water of the Káshká-Darya, which used to flow here, whatever that failure may be attributable to. In the neighbourhood of Kárshi, the ruins of many abandoned towns are also found, and I heard no traditions of their having been destroyed by the inroads of enemies. I therefore think that the diminution of water in the Káshká-Darya played an important part in the devastation of these towns. It is a very probable supposition that the failure of water in the Káshká-Darya was caused by the increase of population of Shahr-i-Sabz, which is at the sources of the river; an increased population required an increased expenditure of water for local irrigation, and this circumstance must have undoubtedly influenced the water-supply of the localities on the lower parts of the river in a disadvantageous manner.

At a few versts from Chim we spent the night, but before reaching the halting-ground we had to stop during the day's march twice at places selected beforehand by the Bukhárans. According to Eastern ideas it is not becoming for important persons to hurry over anything. Here the greater or less weight of body of a man, and his immobility and seriousness, are taken as the measure of a man's worth. The higher a native is on the ladder of rank, the slower and easier are his movements. Heaven help him if he should make a quick movement, or speak a loud or animated word! This man at once loses a considerable amount of respect in the eyes of the people surrounding him. Acting on this principle, the Mission rode very slowly, with frequent halts. In front rode three mounted Bukhárans, Yasáwal-báshi,* with golden sticks in their hands, a symbol of the authority of the personages riding behind them. These officials, proceeding in advance, show that the persons behind are deserving of the greatest honour.

At the evening halt the Mission was met by a fresh Bukháran deputation, amongst whom were two youths, sons of the Beg of Kárshi. They quickly made friends with the younger members of the Mission, and tried to remember as many Russian words as possible.

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On an outspread carpet at the very edge of a pond a group of men were seated and conversing in a lively manner. All the Mission were here collected, and the subject of the conversation was the forthcoming journey into Afghánistán. General Stolietov, who undoubtedly possessed better information than the other members of the Mission, told us something about the history of Afghánistán, made us acquainted with their customs, and expressed his ideas as to what we might meet with in Afghánistán. Then he spoke about his life in the Caucasus and at Krasnovodsk.

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On the following day we had just woke up and had not yet dressed when they told us that the Amír had sent his Mír Akhor to meet us with a carriage This official soon appeared himself. After long mutual salutations and good wishes, the Mír Akhor stated that he was sent by the Amír to meet his guests and to conduct them with all possible comfort to Kárshi, for which purpose a carriage had been sent with him. The carriage was standing a few paces from our tents; it was a large open equipage like a landau, well swung on its axles with durable springs.

* A person who acts as a kind of master of the ceremonies, but he has also police authority. (*Vide* F. O. Book on Badakshán translated from the Persian in I. B.)

The carriage was horsed with six horses, in pairs. On three of the horses sat Bukhárán postilions, who also acted as drivers, for the coach-box was empty. Over the whole body of the coach was spread a thick elastic silk mattrass; there was no seat.

General Stolietov and Colonel Razgonov got into the carriage, and the remainder of the members of the Mission rode. Behind and alongside of the Mission rode a number of mounted Bukhárans in robes of all the colours of the rainbow. During the day's march to Kárshi we had again to halt several times at places previously prepared, under the pleasant shade of the variegated Bukhárán tents. At one of these halts we were met by the most distinguished white-haired Bukhárán officials. One of these was the Beg of Kárshi.

Ten versts from Kárshi both banks of the capriciously winding river are thickly studded with villages. Gardens extend in an unbroken fringe along both banks. Further on is seen a thick mass of green, with a dusty cloud hanging over it: this is Kárshi.* The nearer we approached the town the greater became the crowd of surrounding Bukhárans. The extensive open plain, extending right up to the city from the south-east, and along which we rode, was literally covered with a mass of all kinds of people, both horse and foot. The people working in the fields left their work and ran after us; others, with their mattock on their shoulder, stared open-mouthed at the Urus (Russians). The small-eyed Kirghiz stood side by side with the tall muscular Uzbak, the coarse lines of whose features expressed less curiosity than the face of his neighbour. Here also was the Tájik, with his fine features, who, stopping his laden donkey, leant up against the wall of the nearest melon field, and also looked curiously at the cavalcade of Russian gentlemen passing by him.

Here we are at the outskirts of the town. The dusty and narrow street extends for a long distance; it is as if uninhabited; there is not a single window in these endless, uniform mud enclosures. Only little wickets, like the burrows of wild beasts, remind the traveller that there are inhabitants in these enclosures. In the following streets, instead of enclosures, there were dense rows of ill-favoured shops. The confined, stinking air overpowered us and made us feel that we were in an Asiatic town. At the shops and houses, there was also a great crowd of people. A few fanatical, scowling faces looked fixedly downwards, not wishing to gaze on the "kafirs." Others threateningly glanced from under their overhanging eyebrows with their fiery eyes. But these were only distinct and solitary individuals. The greater part of the people simply expressed dull curiosity. At the corner of a musjid a *diwána* † produced a scandal. He commenced to overwhelm the Mission with abusive words, threatened us with his fists, and was filled with the by no means praiseworthy desire of throwing stones at us. The Yasáwal-bashi, however, riding in front drove away the insolent man, hunting him away with the same sticks they carried so ceremoniously in their hands.

This scandal astonished me very much, and I hastened to enquire why it had taken place. It appeared that at first the *diwána* asked for alms,

* The actual height of Kárshi, according to Shwartz, is 820 feet; the astronomical position by the same authority is 38° 52′ .3″ north latitude and 65° 46‴ 26″ east longitude from Greenwich.

† A Bukhárán dervish of the order of Naksh-bandi.

but no one gave him anything; after this he had recourse to the convincing process of throwing stones.

After this we had to pass through a small open bazar. The streets here were paved: but, good heavens! what a pavement!—cobble stones simply thrown on to the road without any attempt at ramming, probably with the special object of breaking the hoofs of the horses and the necks of the riders. The carriage in which the General and Colonel rode was greatly jolted, jumping from one heap of stones to another, and those seated in it were thrown, now to this side, now to that. The poor sitters knit their brows, but continued to drive.

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We then drove out of the bazar, turned to the left, went for a few score paces along the side of an *arík*, or water-course, shaded by thick mulberry trees, and stopped before the broad gates of the house intended for the Mission.

This building was of the same type of construction as in Chirákchi; only it was more extensive and cleaner. The inner court, also hemmed in on all sides by lofty walls, was occupied by two wings. In one of these, a one-storeyed one, there were only two rooms; but very large ones. The ceiling was at least 9 arshines (21 feet) from the floor. In this house, besides the usual window doors, there was an upper row of windows, with frames cut out of stone.

The frames were covered over with the bladders of animals which here serve instead of glass. The walls were cleanly plastered, and in some places covered with finely-inscribed verses of the Persian poets and chronograms. The ceiling consisted of an enormous number of very thin planks (not thicker than one inch), firmly fastened one to another, and thus forming a compact sheet, supported on frequent rafters.

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On the opposite side of the court was another two-storeyed building. The striking difference between it and the ordinary type of native houses was that the windows of the upper storey looked out on the street. Under the windows flowed a broad dirty "arík."

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The Mission was conducted into the house with the usual ceremonies, the Mír Akhor performing the part of *maître à l'hôtel*. Our hospitable hosts, however, quickly came to the conclusion that it was unnecessary to give their guests complete rest. The Mír Akhor asked the General about the time for presenting the Mission to the Amír, and received for a reply the answer that "this would entirely depend on the Amír's pleasure." However, the General added that the Mission was hurried, and consequently could not remain long in Kárshi. The Mír Akhor then went to report to the Amír.

At 7 P.M. he again returned and informed us that the Amír begged the Mission to come and have an audience with him on the following morning.

It was necessary to prepare, clean, and wash ourselves for this, &c. The week's march had covered us with a thick layer of dust; one's body itched and required a Russian bath. The proposition of the Mír Akhor to visit the town baths was therefore *à propos* and was accepted with pleasure. I was greatly interested to see the Bukhára

baths. The Mír Akhor gave the necessary orders to one of the Karáwal Begs* attached to him for duty, and in a few minutes all was ready, and we all went there together.

In the meantime the sun had set, and twilight plunged the narrow streets of the town in an indistinct gloom. At length, out of the gloom of the darkening twilight, a weak reddish light glimmered. Two tallow candles lighted up the unenviable entrance to the bath—a small cupola-shaped building. We entered. The whole building consisted of two not very large rooms, the want of ingenuity, and even poorness, of the fittings of which offended the eye. The floor was spread with ordinary dirty "palás," and some tabourets (musical instruments) were scattered about the rooms. The walls were not plastered and the roof consisted of bare rafters. At a certain height along the rooms were stretched cords, and on these were drying various coloured handkerchiefs, just taken from the people who had washed themselves before us. In one corner was an uninviting-looking hearth, on which stood a Russian *samovar*, apparently never cleaned. At the doors leading into the washing apartment stood, like statues, three or four washermen. They were quite undressed, with only a handkerchief bound round their loins and descending in front down to the knees.

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The master of the bath met his unexpected visitors with low bows. The interior of the washing-room was as unattractive as that of the other room, and was very gloomy; without being accustomed to it, it was difficult to see one's whereabouts in this darkness; but afterwards it was not so and we looked round. The washermen advanced to their task. Having heard before of eastern baths, I expected quite different surroundings, but the unsightly reality encountered here by me formed a striking contrast to what I had heard of. Just the same I expected much in the method of washing, but after the first processes of the washermen I became more than sceptical of their skill.

(Description of Turkish bath follows.)

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On the following morning the 7th (19th) of June, about 8 A.M., we were all occupied in preparations for the audience which was to be given the Mission by the Amír of Bukhára.

The Mír Akhor soon rode up and informed us that it was time for the Mission to visit the Amír. We mounted in full dress; the General alone, instead of his casque, had the usual white forage cap on his head. The streets we rode through were crowded with people, and a great crowd followed us. At the turn to the fort one dervish, turning towards us, made some speech or other, and I afterwards ascertained that it was wishing us a prosperous journey. It was expressed in purely Bukháran style and in translation becomes rather startling, for he wished that we might return in safety and good health from the Amír; it was evident that this honourable candidate for Musalman sanctity applied the same standard of the favour of the Amír to us as to his compatriots, for it was not at all an uncommon thing, especially in former times, that a Bukháran who went to the Amír never came back again. But the time had now past for applying this standard of the Amír's favours

* *Karáwal Beg*, a Bukhára official who performs Police duties.—*Translator.*

to strangers, more especially as they were the representatives of a great nation, whose power and magnanimity the Amír, and also the whole Bukháran nation, had had many opportunities of experiencing and of valuing at its true worth.

Before us was the fort of Kárshi. The mud wall, about 35 feet high, in places fallen down, enclosed a considerable extent of ground. The gates through which we passed were flanked on each side by thick, crenelated towers, furnished with loopholes. The thickness of the walls at the bottom was 35 feet. The interior of the fort was occupied by houses of more considerable size than the usual dwelling-houses. Some of them were built of burnt brick. Two or three houses were badly ornamented with mosaic or various-coloured tiles. This was the "Madrassa," or Musulman university. Some oval, discoloured cupolas rose over the adjacent building, which was the mosque. As usual, there was nothing remarkable anywhere. We had to pass through two more gates, and we entered the citadel of the fort, where the Amír lived at that time. Before the second gate were drawn up a detachment of Bukháran infantry, and they saluted the Mission as they passed. I clearly heard the words of command in Russian—"Attention;" "Present arms." The soldiers, chiefly Kirghiz and Uzbaks, were dressed in short red coats, which must have represented their uniform. On their heads were high fur caps, and on their feet high leather boots. They were armed with muzzle-loading rifles. Before these gates the Mír Akhor asked the Mission to dismount from their horses and to pass through them on foot. The Persian interpreter, however, who was also the exponent of Asiatic manners and customs, Nazirov,—presuming that this was only a superfluous (excessive) requirement of court etiquette, which consisted in not allowing any one to enter the fort in which the Amír resided on horseback, but only on foot—refused his proposal. We rode through on horseback, and the Mír Akhor made a sour face. There was yet another and the last gate which separated us from the Amír's residence. Here we dismounted, gave our horses to Bukháran "jigits," and entered the court, which was extensive and cleanly paved with flags of burnt clay; almost in the centre of it was a small tank, nearly full of water. Along the whole northern wall of the quadrangle extended a single-storeyed building. All the front wall of the building was pierced with numerous window-doors; the roof was the usual plaster (mud and chaff). Two doors led to the inner rooms, in which were made two clumsy staircases, with three or four steps. In the court there was not a tree or any living creature.

The Mír Akhor went in front of us, looking suspiciously every way, as if he expected to see something terrible. We followed behind him a few paces off. Then he said in a very low voice that we must wait, and then he went hastily up the stair and looked timidly in at the door; then he quickly retired from the door and returned, walking backwards and bowing low at every step. Then he gave a sign, and we, one after the other, went up the stair. My heart beat uneasily in my breast, and a painful feeling took possession of me. I stood for the first time so near a royal presence, although it was only the Amír of Bukhára; my thoughts involuntarily turned to the distant past, when a move of the hand of this terrible ruler was sufficient to cause a man to cease to exist, no matter what nationality he belonged to. We entered and

in the middle of a spacious hall sat the Amír of Bukhára, Sayad Muzaffar-ud-din Khán.

He was a rather stout elderly man of about 60. His features were very regular and bore traces of having been remarkably handsome; his black eyes looked searchingly from under his grey eyebrows. His slightly arched nose and beard, with a sprinkling of grey, complete the characteristics of the face of the ruler of the true believers in Central Asia. He sat in a very plain chair, and was more than plainly dressed. A simple white turban on his head, a half silk and striped robe of dark colours, mixed with green, was on his shoulders, yellow Turkey leather shoes on his feet. This was the costume of the Amír. When the Mission approached him he slightly rose, but did not make a step forward to meet them. General Stolietov at once addressed him with a complimentary speech through the interpreter, and then presented the other members of the Mission to him separately, notifying each one's special position. When I was presented in my turn, the Amír smiled and said almost the only long phrase he spoke throughout the audience. He expressed astonishment that I was so young and yet a doctor. "With us," said the Amír, "doctors are usually very elderly men, often grey-beards."

He gave his hand to each member of the Mission and roughly invited us all to be seated. Against the wall, opposite the Amír, arm-chairs were placed—seven chairs, evidently of home manufacture, covered with red cloth. After this General Stolietov conversed with the Amír for about quarter of an hour. The Amír generally confined himself to monosyllabic phrases, "Yes" or "No," &c. At the same time his voice trembled somewhat and sounded particularly softly, but his piercing eyes glanced nervously at all the members of the Mission. Now I was able to look round. The audience-hall of the Amír in no way glittered with luxury, embellishment, or ornamentation. It was simply a large room, about 70 feet long and 35 feet wide; with the exception of the arm-chair on which the Amír was seated and the seven chairs occupied by the members of the Mission, there was no other furniture; the bare, cleanly plastered walls were destitute of any ornamentation whatever. The floor was spread with simple "palás," but they were of great size, the whole being covered by only two of them. The ceiling was destitute of even the ingenious embellishment which there was in our dwelling. The adjuncts of the Amír's mansion, as the reader sees, were very ordinary, and not at all in accordance with the eastern pomp of Asiatic potentates, that pomp which has served as a source for enraptured descriptions by a few European and a whole host of Persian writers. We afterwards heard, however, that the Amír had received us in the mosque, as at Kárshi there is no palace specially constructed for him. We before long made our bow to the Amír and had all to walk backwards right to the door,—that is, facing the Amír, who looked after us. When we had left the Amír, the Kárshi Beg invited us to his house; he lived in a neighbouring building, still more unenviable than the one in which the Amír received us. The Beg overwhelmed us with politeness, and entertained us with all he had. The General in a few minutes again returned to the Amír, this time accompanied only by an interpreter, and his absence lasted twenty minutes. During this time we conversed in a lively manner with our hospitable hosts. The Beg asked us what was going on in Táshkand and Samarkand,

why our troops were making a start and where for; he also spoke of the presence here not long before of M. Veinberg and of various other subjects.

In the meantime the General returned, and after him arrived the inevitable Mír Akhor, who followed us like a shadow. Behind him came a whole row of attendants, carrying salvers and bundles, with various presents, which the Amír of Bukhára was pleased to present to the Mission. They were chiefly various kinds of robes, pieces of velvet, pieces of silk stuffs, belts ornamented with gold and silver mountings, studded with turquoise, robes of Karikol lambskins, as soft as the ancient fleece of Colchis, &c. Then, other servants led seven horses past the window, covered with horse-clothes of brocade embroidered with gold. The Kárshi Beg, in his turn, also presented the Mission with various things of the same kind. In returning home we mounted the horses which had been presented to us, and in this way rode right through the town to our residence, pushing with difficulty through the numerous crowd which filled the streets through which the Mission had to pass. The heat was terrible, and perspiration poured in streams from the face of each one of us. You may imagine that as soon as we got home we threw off our hot uniforms, which were quite unseasonable, and put on our lighter white coats, without which a military man would be badly off here in Central Asia.

It seemed to me that the Mír Akhor had a spare pair of feet; for we had hardly dressed when there he was again. He gave General Stolietov the good wishes of the Amír and expressions of the great pleasure experienced by the ruler of Bukhára at the audience. To this he added that, in order to cheer his dear guests, he had sent the court actors, singers, dancers, and other artistes. Then the Mír Akhor requested the General to have all these people in to show their art, but the General refused his request.

"What for? Have we come here for amusement, orfor business?" replied he.

Thus we did not have the opportunity of seeing the native actors and such like artistes.

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In the meantime it was already past mid-day. The heat was greater than it had been on previous days. The tents pitched in the court, in the shade, in which Colonel Razgonov was living, at 1 P.M. reached 42·°6′ C. (108·7 F.). In it you could steam yourself as in a steam-bath, but the Colonel lived in it and did not even complain.

The next day was fixed for the departure from Kárshi, the direction of the route selected being by Guzar, Shírábád, and Chushka-Guzar to the Amú-darya. This route, throughout the greater part of its extent, lies through the mountains. We had, therefore, to prepare for it, and take with us a reserve of shoes, ropes, felt, &c. For all these "Jigits" were sent to the local bazar, and Russian silver money was given them for the expenditure. It appeared, however, that our 20 kopeck pieces (7½*d.*) only fetched 15 kopecks here. "The Urus Tenga* is a lead tenga" (*Urus tenga yaman tenga*) said the natives. They were in fact right; for the silver of Bukhára coinage has a very small

* A Bukhára coin.

quantity of alloy in it, whilst our exchange silver has 52 parts alloy. The Bukhárans soon found this out, and valued our money at its true worth. Our credit notes here had no sale whatever.

At 5 P.M. we were astonished at the appearance in our court of a strange figure, clothed in European costume. This was an old man, of about 50 years of age, or perhaps more. On his back he wore a very much-worn dress-coat, of black cloth; on his head a black sheepskin hat of funereal aspect. He went straight up to the General, and conversed with him for a long time about something; the conversation was carried on in French, which caused us still more astonishment. When he left the General we ascertained that he was an adventurer, one Philippe, a Frenchman by nationality. A few years before he had come to Táshkand, and thence to Samarkand, showing various feats of rope-dancing. Then he penetrated to Bukhára, and at the present time was first actor in the court troupe of His Highness the Amír of Bukhára. It appears that the poor old man would have been glad to return to his native country, but could not do so for want of money. Poor, unfortunate old man! how hard it must be for you to live amongst these savages, remembering your beautiful France, at such an age, and on the verge of the tomb. The Commandant of the Mission afterwards said that Philippe had partly forgotten his native language. I do not know whether the General in any way helped this man, who was truly worthy of pity. We saw him no more.

The evening of this day was dedicated to writing letters to the Turkistán province and to European Russia. The General wrote reports to the Governor-General of Turkistán.

CHAPTER III.

KÁRSHI—AMÚ-DARYA.

From Kárshi to Guzar—Character of the steppe—Episode with the Beg of Guzar—Guzar Jews—Mountain route from Guzar to Shirábád—The Iron Gates—Halt at Sir-i-Ab—Jemadar Teurya—The town of Shirábád—My medical practice—Arrival of an Afghán messenger with a letter—Route from Shirábád to Chúshka-Guzar—Passage of the Mission over the Amú-Darya.

On the following day, the 8th (20th) June, about 5 P.M., we left Kárshi. From this town to Guzar it is only about 50 versts (33⅓ miles) by the direct route. The General decided to accomplish this distance in 24 hours, so that half the journey had to be done that evening, and the remainder the next morning. It was proposed to make a short halt at the half-way house in the small village of Yangikant.

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Near the road itself flows the wide Bísh-Arík, a canal brought from the Káshká-Darya, many versts above this place, with the object of irrigating the local fields. Whilst waiting to change my horse, I saw the bank of the canal, a high breastwork, rising above the level of the water. I may here remark that all the irrigation canals here are generally characterised by high banks. From a distance a rather high rampart only is seen, and you do not in the least suspect that this is nothing but an "arík." When you come right up to this rampart you only then perceive that there is a slight stream of water at the bottom of the bed. Such is the appearance of the local irrigation channels, for the water in them is at a very low level. The Central Asian rivers and streams have a large amount of solid residue, contained in the water and acquired by it mechanically, and owing to this the beds of the *aríks* quickly become shallow, and owing to the rising of the bottom of the *arík* become incapable of carrying the water in the required direction. Owing to this silting-up it is necessary constantly to clean them, *i.e.*, to dig out either annually, or from time to time, the layer of earth deposited in the channel of the *arík*.

This earth is heaped up on both sides of the canal, and in time forms very high ramparts, which in their turn render the irrigation of the fields bordering them not a little difficult. One can, but only to a certain extent, judge of the age of an irrigation canal by its banks, the higher and thicker the banks fringing the bed of the *arík*, the older it is.

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I caught up the Mission when the sun, casting the last gleam of its dying rays, sunk in the evening fog, which was gradually spreading over the horizon. It soon became so dark that one could only ride on by groping one's way. The road was very much cut up, and the horses often stumbled. The night brought on an unpleasant freshness which usually replaces the heat of the day in open steppe localities, and it was unpleasant to ride in only the white linen coat. All wished to reach

the halting-place quickly, but, nevertheless, we had yet many hours to pass in the saddle before we heard the sonorous barking, resounding over the steppe, which is the first and most certain sign of the propinquity of an inhabited spot. Soon, as we turned round the shoulder of a small mound, a bright twinkling spot appeared, towards which our wearied horses directed their steps. Before us was the village of Yangi-kant.* The local aksakál met us not far from the village, quickly sprang off his horse as we approached, and came forward to press the hands of each rider, running up to him and at the same time endeavouring in the darkness to take his hand.

A small dusty caravansarai, with worn-out "yurts" pitched in its court, received us within its walls. After the long march the unpleasing native cuisine seemed very agreeable to me. After supper a conversation arose between the topographer and the General on the inconvenience of marching at night, but notwithstanding that the conversation assumed rather a sharp character. I did not hear it out to the end. Sleep, the powerful sleep of weariness, quickly overpowered me.

Again on the road. Again that same bare steppe to pain one's eyes. But soon the hills, which up till now had only appeared in the east in general indistinct lines, began to come out gradually more in relief with every step we advanced. On the left appeared a small steppe stream, with very precipitous banks, a broad bed, and a thin streak of water in it. High mounds again extended to the right and left, and the ruins of ancient buildings. From amongst them peeped out two or three wretched little villages, with dried-up trees in the gardens. A few irrigation channels again intersected the road, and finally, in the distance, almost under the hills, could be seen a town abounding in verdure, like every other native town. The towns here are in the fullest sense of the words verdant oases, cast into the desert. Nevertheless, even this desert bears within it the inextinguishable germs of life which might be developed to their full extent and in every variety of form if there was only sufficient water; the soil, of itself, leaves nothing better to be desired. This is the so-called "löss," almost the most fertile of all fruitful soils. But there is no water and no life; without water this rich soil is dead. Soon afterwards, crossing a shallow stream by a ford, we entered the town of Guzar.† In one of the gardens, under the shade of some dwarf elms, were pitched some variegated Bukháran tents, which we were not slow to take advantage of.

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The Mír Akhor (not Rahmat Ulla, but the Mír Akhor of the local Beg) as usual performed the duties of an hospitable host, but the General demanded that the Beg Akram Khán,‡ one of the sons of the Amir, should assume the role of host himself, and for that purpose appear at our residence. The Mír Akhor was evidently disturbed by such a request, and not knowing what to say, said, but without success, that the Beg was ill, and consequently could not visit the embassy. The general, however, did not believe the excuse so quickly made up, and insisted on

* Height above the level of the sea 1,150 feet by Shwartz.

† The town of Guzar has an actual height of 1,310 feet by astronomical measurement. It is in 38° 36′ 18″ north latitude, and 66° 12′ 19″ east longitude (Grenwich), according to Shwartz.

‡ The next eldest to Katti-Teura, who fled from Bokhara in 1868, owing to an insurrection against his father, and at that time was a refugee in Afghánistán.

his request. The Mír Akhor then went to the Beg. Two hours afterwards he returned and gave the same answer as before. In consequence of this the General became very angry; he threatened to write to the Amír that he had not been properly received in Guzar. Not believing in the illness of the Beg, the General sent Nazirov to him with the object of ascertaining if the Beg was really ill or not. Nazirov returned in a few minutes and informed us that the Beg was apparently quite well and dressed to go out. At this statement the Mír Akhor at once remarked that the Beg had "rishta,"* and that it was impossible to judge of his illness by his outward appearance.

Very soon afterwards were heard the cries, already known to me, with which the progress of a member of the royal family is always accompanied, and the Beg rode into the garden. They lifted him carefully from the saddle, and, limping along, he entered the tent with the help of the officials accompanying him. The General, who had just then gone into a separate tent specially pitched for this purpose, was at once informed of the arrival of the Beg. He came out with a severe expression. Having enquired after the Beg's health, he drily invited him to sit down. The Beg, a weak man of 30 years of age, without a beard, with an idiotic expression in his brown eyes, silently moved towards the chair placed for him. After this the General turned to the Beg with the following speech. He spoke in Turki himself almost without the aid of the interpreter:—

"This sort of thing is not done between good friends," said the General to the Beg. "Your father, Janáb-i-Ali, did all honour to the Russian Mission, which Bukhára has now the good fortune to see in its territory, and you do not wish to visit us. You ought to have done this if only as a hospitable host. I had already decided to write about your behaviour to your father, and he would not be slow in meting out suitable punishment."

(The General used the word *Chúbúk*, "stick.")

At the last phrase the Beg's eyes sparkled with savage fire; he looked fixedly at one spot; the followers surrounding him were all frowningly silent. The Mír Akhor was on needles, not daring to raise his eyes or move a limb. The moment was a momentous and dangerous one. If the Beg had pronounced one word, or only given a signal, the knives of his suite, the handles of which more than one pair of hands at this moment convulsively pressed, would have been reddened with Russian blood. This was a great trial for the Beg, and it was a very difficult one.

In a timid, whining voice, like a beggar asking for alms at a bazar crossing, the Mír Akhor began to make excuses for the Beg. Teurya Ján is sick; he never thought of insulting the Russian Mission; the General is pleased to be angry without a cause. Why write to the Hazrat (*i.e.*, Amír), &c. The General continued for some time longer to speak in the same tone, but gradually his speech became milder, and he finished with these words, "Now that the Beg had come, he would forget all, and that now there should be nothing but friendship between him and the Beg."

* *Rishta—felaria medinensis*—a very widely distributed local parasitic affection. It has other names, such as tapeworm, &c. This disease was known in Central Asia before the Arab school of medicine flourished here.

The Beg sat down as if dropped into water, and the Mír Akhor was slightly more cheerful.

After the excuses of the Mír Akhor the General said he would be no longer angry and ordered some robes of honour to be brought. The best of them he delivered to Nazirov to put on the Beg. The Beg did not, however, put it on, but only received it, and at once handed it over to the Mahram-báshi. It appeared that the Beg could now take his leave and go home.

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Soon the Beg rose from his seat, gave his hand to the General, and, leaning on the arms of his attendants, went to his horse, upon which he was seated by the careful hands of his suite.

In a few minutes the Beg sent the Mission the usual presents. "I really thought," said the topographer "that it was a case of knives and curved swords flashing out when the General administered his reprimand to Teurya Ján."

"And I thought it was about time to slip out of the tent," said Malevinski in joke.

"Ah! they are nothing but cowards!" remarked the General.

"Yes; the matter might have turned out awkwardly just then," philosophically remarked the Colonel.

With this the incident terminated. The General decided to leave the town at 4 P.M. and spend the night at Kúsh-dúsh, a village at a distance of 20 versts (13⅓ miles) from Guzar. The route now lay through the mountains, almost right up to the Amú.

Amongst the Bukháran servants attending on us here, one man was clearly different from the others. Long ringlets twined on his temples and at once fixed his nationality. His typical nose was well in harmony with the ringlets, like that of a bird of prey;—a nose which might with just as much right be called a characteristic one as a Grecian or Roman nose, and proclaimed him to be a Jew.

This man was the first Jew whom I had met with in the Bukhára khanate. He was dressed in the same clothes as the natives, but had a low awkward-looking sheepskin hat on his head, instead of the usual turban of Central Asian Musulmans. By the laws of Bukhára an unbeliever is forbidden to wear a turban; the "sons of Islam" alone can bind it round their foreheads.

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In Guzar there live several score Hebrew families; they occupy a separate quarter and in the bazar a separate street. Here they are not only a trading people, but also artizans. No one knows how to dye materials better than they do, and they bake the best bread in the town. The Jews apparently here form a useful part of the population.

The General spoke to this Jew. He asked this original factotum about the Beg amongst many other things; amongst others about the Afgháns; and finally asked him the important question as to whether they would receive the Russian Mission or not. To this question the Jew answered very freely, "They will receive you; for these Afgháns are a scurvy lot, who are very glad at hearing that the great Russian Government is sending ambassadors to them." The Jew then enlarged on the subject of "what dogs and robbers these Afgháns were—grasping, lazy, and churlish." He did not deny himself the most unflattering epithets for

our neighbours and future allies. No doubt he had reasons for thus traducing his so-called brothers. It is well known that the Afgháns are inveterate enemies of the Jews: there is no one they so deeply despise as the Jews.*

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Again in the saddle, and marching along the dusty road! The town with its gardens is soon left behind, and we gradually ascend into the hills. After some time the road, having reached the summit of a hill and crossed the saddle, commenced to descend again. Now the hill has completely shut out the town. In front rise stony hills, destitute of any sign of life or cultivation. On the right a river loudly roars which has just broken forth from the hills into freedom. On the opposite bank of the river wander, scattered about, a flock of sheep. This is all.

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The sun had already long since set somewhere behind the hills; the evening shadows were gathering thicker and thicker, and the gloom of night had already covered the whole of the narrow valley of the stream when we reached our night halting-ground. This was Kúsh-lúsh—a few smoke-blackened "yurts," pitched in a meadow on the very edge of the stream. Close by the flame of a scarcely smouldering wood fire was dying out. The baggage animals came up soon after us.

On the following morning early, the baggage animals were slowly winding their way up the steep path into the hills in single file when we moved from camp. We had again to cross the stream by a ford. It was so deep at this place that there appeared to be danger of our travelling trunks getting wet, and in other places horses could only cross the river by swimming. Slowly, and with many halts, we climbed the hill. At the very summit of the ascent, forming the crest of a low pass, a belt of granite sharply projected, forming literally the "crest" of the hill. From here a rather extensive view opened out over the surrounding locality.

In the far east and north were seen dark blue mountains, crowned with a bright belt of eternal snow, covering the mountain masses with its white veil. To the west was the steppe extending into the far distance, boundless as the ocean. At one's feet extended a sea of hills, like stony waves, now softly rounded, now clearly raising their sharp crests and ridges.

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A few moments afterwards our cavalcade quietly descended into a shallow valley, rendered verdant here and there by corn-fields. Here a whole herd of donkeys met us; they were pluckily dragging on their strong backs two thick pine beams apiece. Their drivers looked at us placidly, exchanged a few words with our drivers, and continued their monotonous way. Having reached the bank of the same river, which here was considerably narrower, we reached the striking defile of "Akdahan."†

This defile is in a thick limestone ridge at right angles to the course of the river. The stream has literally cut through it, and both sides

* The Afgháns are descended from the ten tribes of Israelites taken prisoners by Shalmanezar.

† The White Pass.

of the defile fall precipitously to the water, and in their lower parts are smoothly polished by the river. The walls rise about 20 sajénes (140 feet) on each side of the defile.

Then, following parallel to the bed of the stream, which had now become a brook, we reached its source at the village of Chashma-i-Háfizán. The road was unwooded throughout; in one place alone we passed a solitary gigantic juniper. From this juniper (*archa*), the place itself has received the name of "Ek-Archa,"* which means "the single juniper." In a line with the tree is placed a pole with rags on it—a sign that here is the tomb of some Musulman saint. It was not difficult to understand how this solitary pine had been preserved, whilst all round there was not a single tree. The tree was sacred to the saint whose bones were resting at its roots.

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Chashma-i-Háfizán is a small village, nestling at the foot of the hills, rising to the east of it in a precipitous cliff several hundred feet high. Here we passed the night.

On the following day the cold forced us to start even earlier than we had intended; at 5 A.M. the thermometer under the shade of a tent only reached 12 C. (53⅗ F.). Over our white coats we had to wear our greatcoats. On this day we crossed the low pass of Ak-rabát and passed through a celebrated defile, called in ancient times "The Iron Gates."† Even if the massive iron gates were not fixed in it which the celebrated Chinese traveller Súán Shán speaks about in the seventh century A.D., yet the name would be appropriate, for the gloomy, black rocks, rising perpendicularly several score feet, are like the gigantic iron posts of gates. Nevertheless at the present time this defile is called by the natives Buzgoli Khána, or the "Goats' House." I could not obtain from the natives any explanation of this with a semblance of truth about it. The length of the defile is about 2 versts (1⅓ miles); it is literally a cleft in a transverse granite range of hills; granite, however, generally forms the lower stratum of the mountain section; the upper stratum consists of beds of shale. The defile in places narrows to 5 paces in breadth, and nowhere exceeds 30 paces. The road is excessively difficult in consequence of enormous stones which fall down from the sides of the defile and block it up. Nevertheless the Bukhárans were clever enough to take heavy artillery by this road to Hissár in 1875. In spring, during the melting of the snows a furious mountain torrent flows through the defile, and there is then no communication through it; they then turn the defile by the right over a low pass.

The description of this defile is given by the well-known Chinese traveller Súán Shán, who, it appears, was the first to describe it. After a three days' journey in these mountains‡ in a south-westerly direction the traveller entered the pass called "The Iron Gates." "This gorge," says he, "is between two hills, which rise parallel on the right and left to an astonishing height. A path alone divides them, which is very narrow and steep. The two hills form enormous walls, the colour of iron, on

* The height of Ek-Archa above the level of the sea is 3,150 feet, according to Shwartz.

† The height of the iron gates above the level of the sea is, the western end 3,740 feet, the eastern 3,540 feet, according to Shwartz.

‡ Súán Shán went from Kesh (Shahr-i-Sabz) to the valley of the Amu to the Tokhar kingdom.

both sides; the passage is closed by folding-doors, made of iron, and to the gates are suspended a number of bells. From this circumstance, as well as owing to the difficulty and strength of the pass, it has received its name."*

From this description it is evident that within historic times the bottom of the defile was much higher than it now is (a steep path). Owing to the absence of any other exit for the spring waters from the valley situated above the defile, they must have become accumulated in it, and thus a lake must have been formed in front of the defile. It appears to me that the basin from which this defile leads still bears the characteristics of a former lake; the bottom of this basin consists of deposited earth, and is studded with enormous stones. This supposition has some air of probability, but this same Súán Shán says nothing about a lake. At present it is true that the defile is still very narrow and furnishes a narrow path; it does not, however, rise steeply, but is almost horizontal, with slight ups and downs. The 1,200 years which have passed from the time of Súán Shán to our day have greatly changed the form of the defile, and the mountain torrent has done its work, having washed away even the smallest trace of a pass in this defile.†

Six hundred years afterwards another Chinese, Chán-Chún, passed through this defile, also travelling, it appears, from Kesh into Tokharistán to visit Chengiz Khán. But his description is not very accurate, so one has cause to doubt whether he passed through here. This is his text‡: "Travelling south-east from Kesh, we crossed a mountain; this mountain was very high and large; stones lay in heaps in disorder; the soldiers themselves had to drag the carriages; in two days we reached the other side of the mountain. We went by a watercourse south, and the escort went northwards to beat off robbers. In five days we reached a small river, which we crossed in a boat; both banks were covered with thick wood; on the seventh day we crossed a great river in a boat, which is the Amu-Muliyán."

In this statement the only thing in common with Súán Shán is the direction of the route, and this leads to the supposition that Chán-Chún passed through the well-known defile, for he travelled south-east.

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Eight hundred years afterwards (in 1404), on the 24th August (5th September, on a Monday), probably the first European passed through the "Iron Gates," the Ambassador of the Spanish King Henry III, Roy Gonzales de Clavicho, sent to Tamerlane.

He thus describes the pass§: "This mountain is very high, and at this place there is a passage which you have to make through a hill by a cleft or rift; it appears exactly as if made by human labour, because on each side very high hills rise up, and the passage is level and

* Yule: Sketch of the Geography and History of the Sources of the Amú-Darya, translated by O. Fedchenko, 1873, page 17.

† In the translation of the memoirs of Súán Shán by St. Julien, however, this is how the defile is described: "On appelle ainsi (les portes de Fer) les gorges de deux montagnes parallèles qui s'élèvent à droite et à gauche et dont la hauteur est prodigieuse. Elles se sont separées que par un sentier, qui est fort étroit, et en outre *hérissé de précipices*" (Vol. 1, page 23). This *herissé de précipices* is by Fedchenko translated by the word "steep" (path), which is manifestly not the same thing.

‡ Palladie: Works of the Russian Religious Mission to Pekin, Vol. IV, page 319.

§ Roy Gonzales de Clavicho: "Travels to Samarkand in 1403-06, page 230-02, translated by J. J. Sresnevski.

very deep. In the middle of this mountain pass there is a village, and the mountain rises very high above it. This pass in the mountains is called 'The Iron Gates,' and there is no other pass in the whole of this range except this one. It protects the kingdom of Samarkand; for there is no other pass from the side of Little India, except this, by which to reach the kingdom of Samarkand, and, *vice versâ*, the inhabitants of the kingdom of Samarkand cannot go to India except through this pass. Timúr Beg has possession of these 'Iron Gates,' and they bring him in a great income; for all merchants from India to Samarkand pass through them. The mountains, in which are the 'Iron Gates,' are not covered with woods; they say that in this passage from one hill to the other there used to be gates all covered with iron, and no one could dare to pass through them without permission." Not long before this traveller passed through (*viz.*, in 1398), the terrible Timúr traversed the "Iron Gates" with his troops returning from his Indian campaign. After this, up to 1875, it appears that not a single European had been in the defile. In this year Maev passed through, also Petrov and Shwartz.*

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From this gorge we came out on the Shor-áb, the characteristics of which are seen from the name; Shor-áb meaning "salt water."†

The stream flows through a mountain depression. Halting to rest ourselves and our horses here, we again went on. We had on this same day to pass through a no less grand defile than that of the "Iron Gates," called after the name of the river the Shor-áb. Then, crossing two passes and travelling 7 or 8 versts in a narrow hollow, we reached our halting-place for the night at the village of Sir-áb.

The first thing that attracted our attention, when, having surmounted the last hill, we descended to the village, were two gigantic Chinar trees; they grow on each side of a clear bubbling brook, giving a great deal of shade, and our "yurts" had been placed under them; there were also under the wretched village musjid two small reservoirs of water abounding in fish. One of these Chinars had already outlived its age; its top was dried up, its branches broken off, and inside was such an enormous hollow that the guardian of the neighbouring mosque had made a dwelling for himself and all his family in it. The second Chinar was still more colossal, and preserved its full vigour and strength; it rose at least 15 sajénes (105 feet) above the brook. Its branches formed a whole grove; the circumference of its trunk, at a height of $2\frac{1}{2}$ arshines ($5\frac{5}{6}$ feet) from the ground was 45 quarter arshines ($26\frac{1}{4}$ feet), which gives a diameter of considerably over 1 sajéne (7 feet). On the north side of the trunk is an inscription in Persian, "Maev and Petrov, 1875." The age of this colossus must be very respectable. The natives say that the 4th Caliph, Ali, rested under its shade, after a difficult march in the neighbouring hills; consequently, popular report puts the age of this tree at 1,200 years, but this amount is, of course, much exaggerated. We may remark that the Central Asians generally ascribe any prominent thing to Ali, or any place remarkable for something. Thus the town of Shírábád is also considered to have been built by Ali, in honour of whom it has probably been called by this name (*shír*, "lion;" and *ábád*, "town"). But calculations based on the

* For account see Kostenko's Routes, translated for I. B.—*Translator.*

† Nevertheless the water in the river is not the least salt.

annual increase in size of a tree and its diameter give the number of years approximately at 800 to 900. Lower down the course of the stream stood smaller colossal walnut trees. On each side of the stream extended extensive gardens, running from the nearest hills into the ravines, and afterwards again appearing on the further hills. Amongst the gardens were seen mud huts, the dwellings of the natives. The village has about 200 houses, and is situated at a height of 2,790 feet above the level of the sea. The inhabitants of the village are all Tájiks. This charming little spot, so pleasing to the eye, is protected on the east and west by steeply rising hills.

The western range, at several hundred paces from the village, rises precipitously to from 2,000 to 3,000 feet, and at that time there sparkled upon it in the sun the remaining patches of the winter snow. The ridges and clfets of the rocks are shaded by occasional juniper trees, which from a distance look like green moss. Here the General fixed the halt for the day, and the hours passed gloriously. One could bathe in the brook and get rid of the dust which had settled on one's body on the preceding marches and made one feel itchy all over. On this day the General again told us about the Afgháns.

It may be taken for granted that we listened to him with great attention, endeavouring to remember every word; for this was the only chance we now had of becoming acquainted with Afghánistán. However, afterwards it turned out that the General had some of the best sources of information on the geography and history of Afghánistán and Central Asia generally. Amongst others he had the books, "Kábulistán and Káfiristán," by Gregoriev; "Eastern Turkistán," "Kabul," by Burnes. The campaigns of Alexander of Macedon, of Quintus Curtius, &c. Speaking of the geographical characteristics of Afghánistán, the General praised the vegetation of the country very much. "There," said he, "it is not at all like what we see here, riding through this lifeless rocky mass; there, according to the accounts of travellers, the mountains are covered with woods, and clear streams and brooks flow in the ravines, and the country generally is in the fullest sense beautiful. It is not for nothing that the Afgháns love their country so much, and so obstinately make war to secure their independence. Then the Afgháns themselves," continued the General, "are not at all the same as these Bukhárans; the latter are nothing but wearers of fine clothes, but with the Afgháns it is quite another thing; they have preserved something of the middle ages and chivalry."

The General advised me to learn Persian, and the same day, taking his advice, I wrote and learnt a good many words and phrases.

On the same day the *personnel* of the Mission was increased by several persons. About mid-day on the 12th (24th) June, when we were enjoying the day's halt under the shade of the enormous Chinar, a tall old man, with a long white beard, rode past our tents. He was very well dressed in Asiatic fashion, and bore himself with great dignity. Behind him rode several servants with some baggage animals. He had already disappeared behind a neighbouring hill, when Zamán Beg recognised him and informed Colonel Razgonov; the latter at once told the General, who decided to send after the old man and ask him to return. A horseman was at once sent, and in a few minutes we saw this respectable person riding back. He rode up to our "yurts," and

went into one at the General's invitation. The traveller at once recognised Zamán Beg and greeted him friendlily as an old acquaintance. This person is deserving of our full attention, and therefore I will say a few words which I do not think are superfluous.

This old man was known in Central Asia as Jemadar Teurya.* He was born in the Punjab, not far from Lahore. He commenced his military career in the wars of Runjit Singh. After the death of the latter and the transfer of the possessions of the Sikhs to the annexing hands of England, he removed his military activity to Central Asia. At the time of the storming of the town of Táshkand by General Chernaiev, on the night of 14th to 15th June (26th to 27th) 1865, Jemadar Teurya was amongst the number of the defenders of the town and was wounded. After the fall of Táshkand he retired to the Khanate of Kokán, whence he quickly went to Kashgár, where he was the right hand of Yákúb Beg for several years. He rapidly obtained the high title of "Pervanachi," and became chief commandant of the Kashgár artillery. In 1877, after the death of Yákúb Beg, when the dissolution of the Khanate of Kashgár followed and its conquest by the Chinese, the Jemadar, like many other Kashgáris, retired to Táshkand, where he lived till the spring of 1878. Not long before the starting of the mission for Afghánistán, the Jemadar determined to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca, and chose the route by Kábul and Bombay, and thence intended to go by sea. The Governor-General of Turkistán took advantage of this circumstance to send by him a letter to the Amír of Afghánistán, Shír Ali Khán. The Jemadar, however, had somehow delayed his departure, and was only now travelling at the same time as we were.

At this time he was a very tall old man (about 14 vershoks in height†), about 80 years of age, slightly humpbacked, but still apparently strong and vigorous. His very muscular body proved that at a former time he had possessed extraordinary strength and an iron constitution. His face had regular features, and was not unpleasing; his fiery eyes looked sharply out from under his grey overhanging eyebrows. He spoke slowly in a deep bass voice. The General, who conversed with him in Persian, informed us that the exactness of his speech suffered greatly, partly because of bad pronunciation, and partly because he had made a kind of mixture, a universal language, out of four languages and several Asiatic dialects. In one and the same phrase he put in Persian words with Turki, and wound up with Indian. He had become acquainted with Zamán Beg when in the service of Yákúb Beg, where they passed several years together. Zamán Beg expressed himself in flattering terms about the Jemadar. According to him he was a very upright and honourable man, and possessed the greatest courage. The General, seeing that he was a very suitable man for the Mission, proposed to him to go with us, which he willingly consented to do. From this day we looked upon him as a member of the Mission, and he afterwards fully justified this view of him.

On the following day the 13th June (25th), early on the morning, long before the toothless "muazzin" of the neighbouring mosque gave

* Kuropatkin also speaks of him in his work Kashgária, pp. 106-07.

† This must be a misprint for 41 vershoks; 1 vershok=1¾ inch. Fourteen vershoks would be only 24½ inches; 41 vershoks=5 ft. 11½ in.—*Translator.*

the call to Namáz-i-awal, or first prayer, we had already left this charming nook. The road soon entered the hills by an ascent, strewed with sharp stones and coarse pebbles.

To Lyáilyákán, the next station to Sir-i-áb, it was 30 versts (20 miles). This is rather an extensive village, situated on the bank of the River Shírábád-Darya. In the village are rather large gardens. From here to the town of Shírábád there remained 20 versts (13⅓ miles). This march was quickly made, and at 5 the same day we rode into the extensive gardens of the town. From Sir-i-áb we rode the whole time along the river Shírábád-Darya, which supplies life to this valley. Along its banks are seen rather extensive fields sown with wheat.

About 5 versts (3⅓ miles) before reaching the town of Shírábád, the last defile in this range of mountains has to be passed through. This defile is called the "Nán-dahan" (*nán*=bread). However strange the name of the defile "Bread pass" may appear, it is, however, the right one; and it is quite in accordance with Asiatic customs and those of uncivilised people generally to use eccentric comparisons to define the names of things. This pass consists really of two passes, as it were of two gates, one to enter and the other to issue by. Both gates are pierced by the Shírábád stream. The sides of the entry gates gradually open out, and each side describes a semicircle which is closed by the defile of exit. Thus a nearly regular circle, or rather oval, is formed by the curved sides, with a long axis of 3 versts (2 miles) and a short one of 2 versts (1⅓ miles). The area of this oval has a complete resemblance to a native bread cake, "nan."

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In consequence of the melting of the snow at the sources of the river, it was now rather in flood. The road at the entry to the defile lies along a cornice clinging to the overhanging wall of the defile, and was slightly inundated by water. The southern exit of the defile was inundated to a much greater depth. It was also blocked by huge stones lying across the channel. The water beat terribly on the rocks and stones, and rushed furiously through the very narrow opening of the defile; it may be imagined that the passage through these gates was not particularly convenient. At night one might presume that it was impossible to pass. At the period of the river's greatest flood the defile is quite impassable, and the road bends round it to the left, making some ascents and descents through a range of hills. This defile is described more clearly by Chán-Chún than that of the "Iron Gates." This is what he says: "We crossed a large mountain on the return journey from Tokharistán to Samarkand, in which there are stony gates; from a distance they look quite smooth; a huge stone lies across them, forming, as it were, a bridge; below is a roaring torrent. Drivers driving donkeys, in order to cross the stream, make them swim. Along the banks lie a number of animals' corpses. This point forms a passable barrier, and was taken by an army not very long ago."*

Judging from this description, one may conclude, with great probability of correctness, that the traveller speaks of the defile known as the Nán-dahan. At the exit of the defile the Mission met the officials

* Palladie I, p. 323.

of the town of Shírábád,* with the son of the Beg at their head. After this we again had to traverse the dirty, narrow, dusty streets of the town before we reached the garden appointed for us. Our tents and "yurts" were pitched in the shade of some thick elms surrounding a small pond. The garden abounded in fruit trees—golden-coloured apricots, not quite ripe; but rosy peaches were seen in masses through the tender leaves of the trees. Not far off were seen juicy, but not quite ripe, bunches of red grapes. In the garden there was abundance of soft grass and fragrant clover. Amongst the dishes of the dastarkhwán here, they gave us quite ripe melons and water-melons. The melons were excellent, but one cannot say the same of the water-melons; they were very watery. I had just extended myself with the greatest enjoyment on the soft grass under a tree covered with apricots, when I was sent for by the General, who told me that the local Beg was ill, and had asked that the doctor of the Mission might be sent to him. I at once went, taking with me Zamán Beg in the quality of interpreter. Our way lay through the bazar of the town.

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The road soon began to go up a hill, and in a few minutes we rode up to the gates of the citadel where the Beg lived. Beyond these gates the road continued to rise higher and higher; it finally became very steep, and then steps appeared made of wood and stone. In front rose another wall, and in it other gates. In front of these gates is a small space, on which I halted for a minute. From here an extensive and beautiful view opened out over the town.

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The hill on which the Beg's palace-citadel is built is really a most remarkable feature of its kind.

It consists of a rock about 20 sajénes (140 feet) above the level of the river, and on three sides—the west, north, and east—is bounded by precipitous walls of rock; the only side which is at all sloping is the south, and therefore it is defended by two thick walls.

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On the 14th June (26th) we made a quite unexpected halt at Shírábád,—that is to say, it was not in the programme. The General was generally stingy in halts, but now he agreed to one, more or less complaisantly.

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At length, on the 15th (27th) June, we left Shírábád in the direction of the Amú-Darya, the ancient Oxus.

Two routes lead from Shírábád to the Amú-Darya in the direction of two points of passage. The upper passage, Patta-Guzar, is almost in the same meridian as Shírábád. The lower passage, Chushka-Guzar, is 30 to 40 versts from the former down the river; it was decided that we should go to the lower passage, Chushka-Guzar.

About noon the dusty streets of the town were thronged with people accompanying the Mission. The Beg's son at the head of his attendants and the Aksakáls of the town rode in front and showed the way. Not far from our residence we met something quite new to us. Three horsemen penetrated through the crowd of strange appearance and

* The actual height of Shírábád is 920 feet. It is in 37° 40′ 36″ N. Lat., and 67° 2′ 4″ E. Long., fixed astronomically by Shwartz.

curiously dressed. One of them rode up to General Stolietov and gave him a sealed packet.

The General took the packet and gave it unopened to one of his interpreters, and then continued to ride forward. The man who had given him the letter then asked him (in the Persian tongue) to read it through, but he replied that he had then no time to read the letter, and that when the Mission reached the halting-ground that he would at once read it. The unknown horseman did not insist, but riding off to one side followed us with equanimity. We were informed that these were Afgháns.

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It seemed that from his outward appearance one might doubt this horseman's Afghán origin. If we add to this that he rode in an English saddle, and had English reins in his hands, it will be understood why the Mission put him down as an Englishman in the service of the ruler of Afghánistán. The Mission was already partly prepared for this supposition, because General Stolietov repeatedly expressed the opinion that the Mission would meet many Englishmen in Afghánistán in the service of the Amír, Shír Ali Khán.*

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The man set down by us as an Englishman would not, however, own himself to be a son of proud Albion. In fact during the mid-day halt Malevinski addressed him several times in the English language, but always received for sole answer a stubborn silence. The expression of the Englishman was also sometimes lighted up with irony. In consequence of all this, he became yet more and more an enigma to us. In the meantime, having traversed several versts, we again left the limits of the cultivated locality which surrounded Shírábád on three sides with a belt of villages and fields. The road now again lay over rich soil, but sterile and lifeless owing to the absence of water. On the right-hand side (looking southwards) this steppe is bounded by the Shírábád mountains raising their mist covered summits to a height of 6,000 to 7,000 feet. To the south and south-east the steppe disappeared into space and blended with the horizon. Our halt for the night was fixed at an unfortunate village, 20 miles from Shírábád, on the road to Chushka-Guzar. Not far from it rose the ruins of a fort, town walls, and the remains of houses. I did not call this village unfortunate undesignedly; for if one were to believe the reports of the natives,—and why should one not do so?—this little village receives water brought from the Shírábád-Darya, but it only reaches it once out of three years. For two years out of three not a drop of water reaches it from the Shírábád-Darya, distant 10 miles. This order was given by the Bukhára Government owing to some crime of the inhabitants of this and two other neighbouring villages—a strange and at the same time a terrible punishment.

But I personally doubt the reasons attributed for such a distribution of water. If such a distribution is the result of punishment, it is only that of Heaven, and is owing to the scarcity of water generally in Central Asia. It is known, for instance, that the town of Bukhára only receives water from the Zarafshán on a certain fixed number of days in the year.

* It is necessary also to keep in view the fact that at that time the well-known Englishman, Captain Butler, was amongst the Turkumáns.

The greater part of the year the canals of the town are dry, and do not contain a drop of water. This is not at all the result of punishment inflicted on the city of Bukhára by the Russian Government, but is simply owing to the fact that for a certain time of the year the Zarafshán contains a comparatively small quantity of water, which is all distributed over the fields in the upper and central parts of the course of the river. It is evident that here we have punishment from purely natural sources, and it is probable that the same is experienced by these villages.

On reaching the halting-ground, the General entered his kibitka and read the letter alone with the interpreter N. The contents of the letter were such that the General considered it necessary to communicate them also to the Colonel. The other members of the Mission were not trusted with its contents, but we unenlightened ones soon perceived that the letter had apparently produced an unpleasant effect, for the General was whispering in a vexed manner with N. and the Colonel, and showed undoubted signs of displeasure from the sharp tones of his questions and answers. N. soon came out of the "yurt" and went towards the tent in which the Afgháns were. There a conversation was also heard which we did not understand, but N.'s voice sounded perplexed and interrogative, and the Afgháns voices were distinguished by quietness and self-confidence. I, being a person not in the secret of the affair, lay down on a carpet spread between the tents and watched what was going on. Getting tired of contemplating a matter I did not understand, and which was being carried out by the General, I went to look at my dearly-loved horse, my long-eared ambler, named by the general voice by all my fellow-travellers the long-eared Philosopher.

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During supper the contents of the letter became known to all the members of the Mission. This letter had been sent by the "Luïnab"* of Chár-Viláyat Shírdil-Khán.† The place of residence of the Luïnab was at the time the town of Mazár-i-Sharíf. In his letter, addressed to the Russian Embassy in reply to a communication from General Ivánov, the Luïnab stated that he had received no orders from the Amír, Shír Ali Khán, relative to the journey of the Mission through Afghánistán to Kábul; that he could not therefore authorise the passage of the Mission through Afghánistán, and begged them to wait at Shírábád, or wherever else convenient to them, without, however, entering Afghán territory. The delay was fixed at a period of ten days, at the end of which the Luïnab hoped to receive detailed instructions on the subject from Kábul from the Amír, Shír Ali Khán.

The General, however, determined not to trouble himself particularly about the letter, but considered that he ought to continue the journey uninterruptedly until such time as the Afgháns showed a plain and decided intention of preventing the further progress of the Mission.

"This is the usual *ruse* of the Afgháns," said he. "As a rule, they do not like to admit Europeans into their country, looking upon them all as intriguers against their freedom. For instance, when Douglas Forsyth in 1873 was returning from Kashgár to India, and expressed a wish to

* This is a purely Afghán title: "loï," great; "naib," deputy.
† Afghán Turkistán is so called.

travel through Badakshán and Kábul, he received a decided refusal from the Afghán Government. They are now practising the same trick upon us. We must not fall into their trap, but go resolutely on."

It was thus decided to continue the march the following morning, and, if possible, also to cross the Amú-Darya.

"It would have been ludicrous," continued the General, "to return to Shírábád and wait there ten days. It is very probable that at the expiration of ten days another period of ten days would be fixed, and God knows how long the affair might thus drag on."

All agreed to this. Nevertheless the General decided to write the Luïnab a letter, in which he explained why the Mission could not wait in Bukhára territory, but must continue its journey without halting. I was afterwards able to ascertain the text of the letter *verbatim*. Here it is:

After the usual compliments, General Stolietov wrote as follows:—

"The Mission cannot await the decision, halted on the bank of the Amú, as this would be shameful to the Russian name; he, the General, is prepared to leave the escort and suite and proceed alone; that he sees nothing disgraceful in being killed on the road, plundered, or taken prisoner, but he refuses to wait; that in addition he promises, in the event of the Amír not wishing to receive the Mission, that he will turn back at once from the place at which the personal intimation of the Amír to that effect reaches him." This letter was handed over the same night to the Afghán messenger for the most rapid delivery possible to the Luïnab at Mazár-i-Sharíf.

In the meantime Muhammad Khán, as the Afghán messenger was called, became a still greater enigma to us. To the question, "What his profession was and what his rank?" he replied: "Whatever rank I may have had, at the present time I am, as it were, without any rank." It was evident that he did not wish to change his rôle of a simple messenger and endeavoured to keep himself isolated. On the following day, early in the morning, our caravan again started on its journey; the steppe here assumed a sandy character. Death reigned around and ruled supreme,—not a bush, not a blade of grass, was to be seen. Only towards the end of the march near the river, some sand-hills appeared; their grey summits crowned with some knarled Saksaoul bushes. The sand, too, was very deep, and the horses' legs sank almost up to the knee. The heat, with a total absence of wind, positively suffocated both man and beast. A sensible joy came over us when, at a turn of the road, in the distance due south, the glittering blue streak of the Amú was seen. It was, however, quickly again concealed behind the hills, and it was only after another half hour that we issued from the sand-hills and plainly saw the mighty river. Appearing far from the east in a bright blue streak, it here makes several windings and disappears from view in the west. On both sides it is fringed with a broad belt of verdure. Its banks for several versts inland are covered with reeds, small groves, and sometimes corn-fields. The halting-place was selected near the river, about 2 versts from it on the high bank. This was done to avoid acquaintance with the celebrated Amú-Darya musquitoes, which in their venomous character have been compared by some travellers to those of Central Africa. It was also not unadvisable to keep oneself at a distance from the still more celebrated Amú-Darya fever miasma, which has its nest amongst the reed-beds on

the banks of the river. The village of Chushka-Guzar* lay to our right some versts lower down the river.

So this was the mysterious river which for so long was such an enigma to the civilized world, like the Nile. It has its Mungo Parks and Livingstones in the form of Moorcroft, Burnes, and Wood. Its exploration has cost no less sacrifices, and it has had its martyrs who did not hesitate to die for the sake of science. I did not sit down in my "yurt." Inviting the topographer to accompany me, I went to the bank of the Amú. The path which led to the bank lay through reeds and thick grass. The exhalations of some peculiar, strong, and somewhat sulphurous smell assailed our noses. But here we are on the very bank of the river. Appearing like a blue streak from a distance, it now presents itself as a broad stream, swiftly bearing along a large mass of very muddy water. The breadth of the river at this point was 2 versts (1⅓ miles). In the middle of the bed in places low islands appeared, overgrown with thick reeds. The banks of the river were very low, and in places even it was impossible to define the shore line; the water covered it, and the river lost itself in the growth along the banks. The whole bank was overgrown with a mass of varied vegetation, moving in waves with the wind; rotting away here this vegetation formed a rich material for the formation of miasma; some of the growth was fresh, but much was in various stages of decay. The reeds growing on the bank were sometimes varied by thin thorn-bushes and thick beds of huge sedge-grass. A few deformed, scrubby poplars (patta), completed the ornamentation of the banks. The water was very thick, and contained a great many solid substances in a state of suspension. Water taken up in the palm of the hand gave a large amount of deposit. On my way towards the river, I had reckoned on bathing in it; but now on seeing its muddy water, all desire for a bath vanished. The temperature of the water in the river at 1 P.M. was 23·4 C. (74·12° F.). On taking it out of the water, the thermometer with the wet mercurial bulb showed 18·6 C. (65·5° F.), and afterwards the mercury began to rise and reached 39 C. in the shade (103·2° F.). The opposite (Afghán) bank appeared to be just as low and desert as the Bukhára side. Two or three sand-hills raised their blunted tops above the surrounding plain, and in the distance were seen groups of rather high trees. On the southern horizon, one could distinguish with some effort, through the haze of the mist, the scarcely visible outline of the Paropamisus mountains. They are distant from the river about 100 versts (66⅔ miles) here.

In the meantime the General had determined to send on Nazirov with a letter to the Luïnáb. This letter was a copy of the one entrusted the evening before to the Afghán messenger for delivery to him. Nazirov at once crossed to the opposite bank. The Bukhárans did not go to sleep, but made arrangements to supply three barges at the required spot; these are here called by the high-sounding title of ships.

On the following day, the 17th June, early in the morning preparations for crossing commenced. Muhammad Khán, seeing these preparations, remarked warningly that the Mission would do better by waiting for the answer, as in any case on reaching the opposite bank the frontier

* Chushka-Guzar is at an altitude of 800 feet, in latitude 37° 21′ 53″, longitude (each from Greenwich) 66° 46′ 56″, by Shwartz.

guard would not allow them to proceed on further. No attention, however, was paid to his warnings.

We ourselves and all our baggage train were soon at the embarking stage. Good heavens! what sort of "ships" were these. After one glance at them, I felt, as it were, all at once translated to prehistoric times. A "ship" consisted of a clumsy, flat-bottomed vessel, knocked together somehow from coarse, badly-fitted timbers. In the vessel there was neither deck nor even a simple poop. Two cross beams strengthened this awkward boat. In it neither oars nor rudder were to be seen. There was water inside it. The bulwarks rose about an arshine (2 feet 3 inches) above the water. The length of the boat was about 5 sajénes (30 feet), breadth 2 (10 feet). Three "ships" of this kind now stood moored to the low bank waiting for us; each of them could carry several hundred púds (púd = 36·113 lb.) load.

The loading commenced. The General decided on first crossing the baggage, animals, horses, attendants, and part of the Cossacks, for the whole Mission with its full complement of horses and baggage could not cross at one trip. The actual method of embarking was beneath all criticism. From the bank to the "ships" there was no gangway or loading board. The boats were pretty near the shore, but still there remained an interval of 1 to 2 arshines ($2\frac{1}{3}$ to $4\frac{2}{3}$ feet). Men could easily jump over this interval, but with the horses it took a long time to load them thus. They did not wish to jump into the boats at any price. Consequently the drivers drove them in by blows from whips and sticks, and in front men in the boats pulled them in with ropes fastened to their halters. But all this gave but little help; the horses broke the hair-ropes, struck the drivers with their hind feet, shied to one side, &c. The bank resounded with such an uproar, such a neighing of horses, such a sound of driving and shouting from the drivers, yelling and whistling from the attendants, intermingled with the blows of sticks falling on the horses' croups, that one had simply to shut up one's ears. Even the Colonel took a part in this babel, and his terrible "Tratúr" (stop) not seldom prevented the sticks and whips from descending on the poor horses. Finally, the drivers and ferrymen decided on trying a new method of embarking the horses proposed by our Caravan-báshi. This consisted in the following: A rope was tied to one of the horse's fore-feet; several men stood in the boat and pulled on this rope with a will, and also on the halter, and thus forced the horse unwillingly to make the leap; at the same time several men with a rope round its hind quarters endeavoured to impel it towards the bank.

All this was accompanied by the usual whistling, uproar, and liberal application of the whip. The horse was simply forced to make the jump. Misjudging the size of the jump, it got its fore or hind legs into the space between the bank and the boat, and had then to be dragged out by hand, and lifted into the boat. With this method of loading, horses can be easily lamed, but fortunately the affair was carried out with only some slight contusions. One must notice, however, that the chief difficulty in loading was with those horses which had never before seen this kind of ferrying; but the horses belonging to the Afgháns and people living along the banks boldly jumped into the boat, and always successfully. Now the "ships" had to be got over to the other side of the river. In the "kayúks" (local name for the barges) there was

neither rudder nor oars. At the bottom of the boat was a solitary pole, but in the deep parts of the stream it would hardly be of any use owing to its insignificant length. This question, however, was soon settled, but the solution savoured strongly of prehistoric life. A horse was driven in the water in front of the boat. It had a bridle on, and to the bridle was fastened a rope. This rope was held by two men standing at the prow of the boat, and in this manner the horse had to draw the boat along. If the river had been shallow, one could to some extent understand the horse's rôle, but it is also clear that a swimming horse (the river is never shallower than 7 feet here) would be quite unable to draw the boat, in addition to a load of several hundred goods, not only against the force of the current, but also in a transverse direction. It could only play the part of a rudder, and that to a modified extent. It could only impart direction to the boat, the motive power being the current of the river.

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To use a horse for this object, without having recourse to a rudder (which is even known to the savage tribes of Central Africa), is not this a phenomenon of aboriginal life to find existing on the banks of a river celebrated in the annals of history? What further proof is necessary that here the human race has not advanced a single step forward since the time of the Græco-Bactrian monarchs, but has even gone backwards? And only a few marches from here lies Balkh, "the mother of cities,"* as it was called by Arab geographers,—that same Balkh which in ancient times boasted of its civilisation (either in the time of the Græco-Bactrian monarchy, or later during the period of the spread of the empire of the Arabs), and about which the Arab travellers relate such wonderful tales. According to these accounts, life—yes, life—and not mere vegetation, flowed here in a broad stream, the sciences and arts flourished, and the people even were able to construct buildings like the then much-vaunted great mosque of Balkh, the great cupola of which boldly rose to a height of several sajénes.† But much earlier still than this period the Amú-Darya was the means of communication between east and west, north and south. It formed the only animated route for Indo-European trade.‡ Now mankind dwelling here is sleeping a deep lithargic sleep. But an end is coming to this vegetation. The dawn of new life is rising from the westward, and commences to enlighten more and more this dark spot called Central Asia—a dark spot in which for whole centuries the human soul has languished, bound with the chains of cruel despotism and unrestrained autocracy, which have at all times and everywhere served, as is well known, as the basis of ignorance and intellectual paralysis—the moral death, in fact, not only of individuals but of whole nations. The water of this quiet, mighty river, which has only heard, up till now, the roar of the tiger or the monotonous improvisation of the Nomad, will soon resound with the whistle of Russian steamers and the bold songs of Russian sailors. The humane laws of man, which Russia introduces with each step forward into the depths of

* In Arabic Um-ul-balád. Arab writers also gave other titles to this town: "The cupola of Islam;" "The earthly paradise;" "The most beautiful country in the world"—*vide* Abul Gházi Khán, "Histoire des Mogols et des Tartars," publiée traduite et annotée, par Baron Desmaisons (note to page 20).

† 1 Sajéne=7 ft.

‡ Wilson, "Ariana antiqua," London, 1841, pp. 162-3. See also Strabo's Geography, Vol. 2, Chapter 1, para. 15.

Central Asia, will secure a peaceful and flourishing condition for that territory. Then the country will awake from its heavy sleep, full of visions of its glorious future.

The boat, borne of course by the strong current, advanced but little towards the centre of the stream, but was carried rapidly down. It was soon completely hidden from view behind the reeds of a low island, which for a few versts below our halting-ground divided the river into two unequal channels, the main one of which was on the further side of the island.

We had to sit a long time on the banks of the river before the "kayúks" again appeared on the opposite bank; in order to reach the spot on this bank at which we were, the boats had to be taken several versts up the river, and they were now dragged up by horses; thus the course pursued by the boats was a triangle, the sides of which were about 5 versts (3⅓ miles) each, and consequently in one trip there and back the boat traversed about 15 versts (10 miles). One can just imagine the time lost by such a means of crossing. It is enough to say that during the whole day only two trips were made. Besides, the Central Asian, generally undistinguished for his rapidity of action, does everything very slowly,—now he turns round, now he looks about him, slowly takes up the work on hand, mutters out "Allah" in all its forms and modes of expression an innumerable number of times, and finally commences to do what he ought to. To a European the spectacle of all this is at first simply unendurable and awakens a kind of nervous irritability, but all one's nervous senses become blunted, and after some time one regards all this with comparative equanimity.

One can easily imagine how jolly it was sitting on the bare bank under the burning rays of the sun. However, the celebrated English traveller Burnes looked upon this method of crossing here with quite different eyes.

This is what we read in his work on the subject: "Harnessing two horses to the prow, they put bridles on them, then shoving the boat from the shore, the horses, without any other assistance, drew it to the opposite bank at one of the swiftest parts of the stream. In this ingenious manner we crossed a river ½ mile wide and flowing 3½ miles an hour in 15 minutes" (?).

Burnes was so enraptured with this method of crossing that he gave the following advice to whoever likes to follow it: "I see no reason against the universal introduction of this kind of crossing, which would be an invaluable improvement upon the ghâts of India.

It is quite possible that in India this would be an improvement, but here, on the Amú, this method of crossing is beneath all criticism.

But now the outline of the boats, gradually approaching our bank, commenced to stand out. They were already in the middle of the river and were coming up to us. They could not reach the spot at which we were, although they had commenced the passage very high up. The "kayuks" were slowly dragged up the bank by the same horses which had brought them across. The boats, however, were not the same. Rajab Ali came across in them; he quickly jumped out and gave us some news which caused us to think seriously—

"The Afghâns won't let us go any further; they are insulting our people and abusing them. Nazirov-Teurya, who was sent with a letter to

Shír Ali Khán, cannot, according to the statement of the Afghán guard, go on to his destination, and is on the Afghán bank of the river. I did not myself see him. I fear he is made a prisoner."

This is what the alarmed Rajab Ali told us. The General at once called up the Afghán messenger and demanded an explanation about all that had been reported, "Did I not not tell you beforehand," said the unmoved Muhammad Khán, "that without the permission of the Amír it would be impossible for any one to take a single step on Afghán soil; the General Sahib would not listen to me, and now he has himself been convinced of the truth of my words. As to the arrest of your messenger I only know just as much as the General Sahib. It is most probable that the frontier authorities would not let him go on to Mazár-i-sharíf, guided by the simple wish of not rendering themselves responsible to the Russians and to the Amír in the event of any harm befalling the messenger on the road. The road too to Mazár-i-Sharíf is not altogether free from danger; not long ago the Turkumáns made a raid in these parts"

This was all that Muhammad Khan would say about it. It is evident that this in no way cleared up the affair and the position of the Mission generally. To wait here on the bank would be simply stupid. The General then formed a council out of the members of the Mission and asked what was to be done. Should we cross to the other side and continue our journey without permission or not? But what would be the object of thus crossing? If we crossed to the other side, the General was apprehensive that the Mission would suddenly appear in the position of prisoners. Who could know what the plans of the Afgháns relative to the Mission might be. They might be made regular prisoners by the Afgháns by the advice of the English. (To such an extent was the Mission convinced of the great influence of the English in Afghánistán.) It is evident that the prospect of imprisonment at Mazár-i-Sharíf, or Kábul, or wherever else it might be, did not appear attractive. It was therefore decided not to cross to the Afghán shore, but to ask for the baggage and people who had already crossed to be sent back again. At the same time there was the danger that the Afgháns would plunder our things and send our people into slavery. The General wrote a letter to the commander of the Afghán frontier guard, asking for an explanation as to why Nazirov was detained? Zamán Beg and Malevinski, who never suffered from low spirits and were thus called out to "voluntary slavery," were to take the letter and to bring back the baggage and men. According to the instructions of the commander of the Mission, they were also to explain to the commander of the post what a responsibility he had incurred by detaining the Mission and preventing its crossing to the other side of the river. At all events our messengers were to threaten them that General Stolietov, having received conclusive reports of the opposition of the Afghán authorities, would instantly, by express, inform the Governor-General of Turkistán of all that had occurred, which could not lead to good results either for the commander of the post personally or for Afghánistán generally. Zamán Beg and Malevinski at once got into the boat and started for the Afghán bank.

There were now only four members of the Mission left on the bank. The sun beat upon us mercilessly. The good Bukháraus quickly rigged up some shelter from the sun for the "Urus gentlemen," in the form of

a shanty. Under the shade of this shanty the temperature was 41·5 C. (106·7° F.). In the open the heat of the sun was so great that a pound of stearine candles, which were in the Colonel's travelling bag, were completely melted and ran over the clothes in it. The General consoled himself and the remaining members of the Mission by various phrases from Persian poets bearing on the present case. Seated on the bare sand of the river bank he quoted the place in Sadi, where this poet speaks so strongly on self-possession: "Place the pillow of patience on the carpet of expectation." In short, in our situation there was nothing to be done but wait and wait. The General soon again called Muhammad Khán and spoke to him in Persian.

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Not long before sunset the "kayúks" again appeared at our bank. Malevinski soon presented himself, solemnly assuring us that he was the first Russian to discover Afghan territory; Nazirov came with him, the imaginary prisoner, the victim of Afghán fanaticism, who had been already almost exalted by us to the dignity of a martyr. He quietly stated that he was not disposed to remain under arrest, but that they would not permit him to go on to Mazár-i-Sharíf. When he, without taking any notice of anything, wished to go on, the restraining hands of the Afgháns took hold of his horse's bridle and turned it round, head to the tail; the soldiers fixed bayonets and crossed their arms and barred the road.

It was clear that he must submit. At the same time Názirov said he had not seen the baggage, and did not know who had invented the news about his arrest. On the other hand, he reported that the Afgháns were very friendly, awaited the Russian Mission as valued guests and invited us to cross to their bank, where they had stored all supplies for the Mission in sufficient quantities; but with all this the Afgháns said that without the permission of the Amír they would not allow the Mission to continue their journey any further. Zamán Beg had remained with the men and baggage on the other bank. The Mission had now to decide a new dilemma; it was evident that the danger of being made prisoners on crossing the Amú was nothing but the fruit of a lively imagination; the Afgháns were hospitable; they were glad to receive Russian guests, but, sticking to the strict letter of the law, would not allow us to go further without the decision of the Amír, or, at all events, of higher authority.

"This is all very well," said the General, "but if the Mission crosses to that side of the river, what will it do there? It is exactly the same thing. We cannot go further. Would it not be better in this case to thank the Afgháns for their friendliness and hospitality, and await the expected decision here on the Bukhára shore? But it is not right to burden the Bukhárans with our further presence, which entails various expenses on them. What will they think too, these Bukhárans, who venerate the name of Russian, when they see that 'the vile Afgháns,' as they call their neighbours, have dared to give their veto so firmly to the Russian Mission, and that it has had to submit to it?"

Whichever way one looked at it, it was an inconvenient position; one way or the other it would produce discord.

In the meantime night came on, and crossing the river could not be even thought of. It was then decided by the commandant of the

Mission that Nazirov was again to cross to the other side and try every means of getting on to Mazár-i-Sharíf. At all events he was to try to send the letter to Shírdil Khán by an Afghán express. By our calculations we made out that the letter might be delivered in Mazár-i-Sharíf (distant from the point of passage 60 miles) by the "chappar" (Afghan flying post) on the following day about 10 A.M.; the reply from Shírdil Khán might be expected to be received here on the evening of the same day. If this calculation were correct, we might receive the definite result of the negotiations on the following evening, or in just 24 hours. It was therefore decided to leave the baggage on the other bank till the following day. Now, all of us who were on the river bank returned again to the old site of the previous evening's halt, and once again afforded the Bukhárans an opportunity of exhibiting their hospitable qualities in all their brilliancy. A fog enveloped the river and neighbouring valley in a thick whitish shroud. Night descended on the earth and ended this eventful day. Before dawn Zamán Beg returned from the other bank, and informed us that Nazirov had succeeded in going on to Mazár-i-Sharíf. The men and horses who remained on the Afghán bank wanted for nothing, and from the Afgháns he, Zamán Beg, had received nothing but friendliness and kind attention.

In the morning Muhammad Khán presented himself to the General and reported that he had received intelligence on the strength of which the Mission could continue their journey to Mazár-i-Sharíf without hindrance. He therefore begged us to cross the Amú. His proposal was accepted, and we slowly crossed to Afghán territory in those prehistoric vessels. Farewell, hospitable Bukhára! *Au revoir*, dear Russia! We have now entered the land which may indeed be entitled for us a "*Terra incognita.*"

CHAPTER IV.

In Afghán Turkistán.

On the other side of the Amú-Darya—Reception of the Mission by the Afgháns—Arrival of the Afghán escort—The first night passed by us in Afghánistán—Route through the Turkumán desert to Mazár-i-Sharíf—Village of Kárshiyák—Reception given to the Mission by the Afghán authorities at Mazár-i-Sharíf—Stay of the Mission in this town—Illness and death of the Luinab of the Chahar Vilayat—Local fevers—Invitation for the Mission to go to Kábul from Amír Shír Ali Khán—Departure from Mazár-i-Sharíf.

About a dozen Afgháns met us on the other side of the Amú. The greater part of them were armed with flintlock guns, with supports having the shape of a fork, which probably also played the part of bayonets. The gun stocks were of a shape I had never seen up to this time,—some like a plain round stick, others like a very much bent crook, &c. I did not observe any stocks such as we were accustomed to see amongst the Russian and other European arms. The material of which the guns were made was undoubtedly of good quality. One could judge of this by the excellent damascening engraved on some of the barrels; others were turned and polished. Some of the soldiers were in coats of grey cloth, like our Cossacks; others were dressed in something calling to mind English uniform, and in Bukhára military coats. Most of them had shaggy conical hats on their heads.

This was the Afghán frontier post, and now formed the "guard of honour" of the Mission. We had scarcely left the boats when they saluted us. Looking closely at the physiognomy of the soldiers, I observed that they nearly all bore the undoubted signs of belonging to the Mongol-Tartar race,—the same broad cheek-bones, narrow-set eyes, and even the same projecting ears as the most pure-blooded Kazán Tartar. I afterwards ascertained that these were Hazáras and their resemblance to Tartars was understood by me.

In the meantime the "ships" began to be unloaded. The low bank, lower than on the Bukhára side, seemed wholly uninhabited. No sign of human life was to be seen for several versts around. The river, the level of which, where we disembarked, only differed from the level of the bank by one or two ¼ arshines (1 arshin = 2⅓ feet), in many places had broken into the tract along the bank inundating large tracts of land. The low-lying bank is always washed by the river, which has here a very rapid current. Its chief channel runs near the Afghán bank, and the rapidity of the current is here very great. Probably the depth of the river here is also great; a pole, 14 feet long, would not reach the bottom; there was nothing with which to measure the depth more accurately. Throughout the whole distance we traversed in crossing the river, which must be reckoned at least at 5 versts (3⅓ miles), the depth was nowhere less than 7 feet. One can picture to one's self what a mass of water this mighty Central Asian water-way bears along.

The horses were again quickly loaded, and we started for the nearest

village, which the soldiers (belonging in all probability to the Afghán militia) informed us was several versts from the river-bank. The route at first lay through a continuous marsh. The horses, especially the baggage ones, sank in the mud up to their knees, and some even fell under the weight of their loads. In the middle of one of the deepest pools an Afghán officer met the Mission with some horsemen. On our approach he saluted us. This was the "Sarhang" (corresponding to our rank of lieutenant) at the head of the frontier mounted guard. Soon the mud became less deep than before, fields extended to the right and left, sown with wheat and maize, and after this we rode into the street of an Uzbak village, hemmed in on both sides by mud fences. What attracted our attention most was the shape of the houses; they reminded one of Egyptian temples in miniature. The walls, in fact, were not perpendicular, but built slanting inwards. The second thing we noticed was the number of mulberry trees, cut close, and with young shoots—an undoubted sign of silk-worm culture. An extensive court, with "one miniature Egyptian temple," was occupied by the Mission. The "yurts" were already pitched, and our Cossacks and people who had crossed the evening before met us in their full complement and in perfect health. The baggage was arranged in order in the middle of the court and a guard put over it.

When we had settled ourselves at our new halting-place the Sarhang informed us that the Mission would have to pass two or three days in this village. Naturally this information evoked a protest from us. "If it was necessary to wait here, why call the Mission over to this bank?" said we. "Why, in such a case, did you promise not to hinder the movement of the Mission on Mazár-i-Sharíf? What is this? Are you turning us into ridicule?" The Sarhang answered all these questions with the greatest respect that "they, the Afgháns, not only had not intended to deceive the Russian ambassadors, but, on the contrary, were very glad to see them amongst them, and were even ready to reckon them as their brothers. If it was now necessary for the Mission to wait a little, it was for its own good."

"The road is not without danger," said the Sarhang; "we do not wish our precious guests to meet with any unpleasantness on the road. In consequence, an escort which will arrive here in a few days from Mazár-i-Sharíf will accompany the embassy. With the escort, two people of note are coming to meet the embassy." To this we replied that an escort was not necessary for the Mission, 22 armed Cossacks and the dozen Afghán infantry soldiers and horsemen seen by us would be sufficient escort. With regard to the reception; as he, the Sarhang, had met us, he could conduct us.

"I am an humble individual and of low rank. I am unworthy to meet, and all the more so to conduct, such a lofty embassy," said the Sarhang. People of note are coming to do this, and regarding your wish to proceed without escort, I permit myself to observe that you do not know our country, especially this locality. An escort, and moreover a large one, is necessary. It is also necessary for the respect due to the Russian embassy."

There was nothing to be done. We had again to submit to our fate. It was evident that nothing could be done by breaking through. Conse-

quently, dismissing the Sarhang, the Mission occupied themselves in their customary work. The General began to write his reports, the treasurer, in this case Zamán Beg, to make a long line of our conductors and reward each one with a robe (*khilat*) for his trouble. It was afterwards curious to see a whole row of natives, clothed in robes, glittering in the sun with all the colours of the rainbow, pressing their hands, wrapped in their long sleeves, to their stomachs, making low inclinations and muttering incoherent words of thanks.

(Here there is a description of spinning silk from cocoons.)

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Zamán Beg became ill on this day with a light form of intermittent fever. Doubtless his sickness resulted from his passing the whole night on the bank of the Amú when he went to release Nazirov and bring back the baggage. I had heard beforehand that the Amú-Darya fevers were particularly severe; consequently I took the following measures. It appeared to me necessary to take something, so I myself took a small quantity of quinine daily, and recommended the others to do the same. Notwithstanding this Zamán Beg sickened; fortunately the attack was very slight, and he felt himself better the same evening. I was employed at my diary, but it was so hot and stifling in the "yurt" that I could only do even this light work with difficulty. Moreover, I had to break off recording facts in my diary owing to the arrival of the Afghán escort which was to accompany the Mission to Mazár-i-Sharíf. At the head of it came two Generals. Its arrival was quite unexpected, and we had already resigned ourselves to passing two or three days here. Our joy may be imagined at the news of the arrival of the escort. It was impossible not to notice the peculiar celerity with which the escort had reached the Mission's halting-ground; such haste was not at all customary with Asiatics. Owing to this we might presume that the Afghán Government attached an excessively important significance to the arrival of the Russian embassy. It was evident that they were desired guests for Afghánistán. The circumstance that at the head of the escort which had arrived there were two Generals confirmed us in this idea. One of these was the assistant of the Luïnab, and the other the commandant of Takht-i-Pul, a fort serving as the *point-d'appui* of the power of the Afgháns in the Chahar-Vilayat. The escort consisted of 200 horsemen and about 100 infantry.

About 4 P.M. both the Afghán Generals, with several officers, paid the Mission a visit. Their dress was the same as Muhammad Khán's, only the senior General, the Luïnab's assistant, was in slippers, but this was due to rheumatism in the feet, as he afterwards explained. The General bore the name of Mirza Mahomed Hussein Khan, Kemnab;* he also had the title of "Debír-ul-Mulk." He was a man of medium height, of about 50 years of age. His expressive countenance, with its hooked nose and fiery black eyes, gleamed with intelligence; his black bushy beard was slightly ornamented with a reddish-brown colour. His companion, the commandant of Takht-i-Pul, onthe other hand, dazzled the eye by the brilliancy of his beard and nails. This ill-favoured man had eyes in his face—which was shrivelled, as if tied in a knot—which seem to pierce you through. In the cold glitter of his eyes, his compressed

* Kemnab and Debir-ul-Mulk, different Afghán titles and ranks.

lips, and the angular traits of his features, could be seen an indomitable iron will. As a fact, he was famed among the Afgháns for his bravery, and had especially distinguished himself at the taking of Maimena by the Afgháns in 1875, where he was severely wounded. The Mission received the Afghán Generals on a small terrace, formed on the bank of a rather broad irrigation channel, brought here from the Amú-Darya. Having no furniture, both guests and ourselves were obliged to squat on our heels. The phrase "having no furniture," however, is not quite true. The Mission had brought with them half a dozen camp-stools and two camp-chairs, but they were not unpacked, and consequently could not be used. The Generals saluted the Mission by placing their hands to the tops of their hats (*kulahs*), and then pressing the hand of each member of the Mission. After this Debír-ul-Mulk once more put both hands to the edge of his head-dress and then sat down on the carpet. A number of Afghán officers, who had come with the Generals, stood at the sides round the embassy group. They formed an interesting spectacle.

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Our acquaintance Muhammad Khán sat down in line with the commandant, and now we found out who he was. It appeared that he was in no way connected with the sons of foggy England. He was a native Afghán, one of the attendants of the Luïnáb, "ditén"* (rank corresponding to Yessáwal) Mossin Khán. He sat quietly in his corner and immovably listened to the conversation between Debír-ul-Mulk and General Stolietov. Sometimes he threw in two or three words to the general conversation, and then was again silent. The commandant hardly opened his mouth during the whole time of the conversation; he only blinked and stroked his coloured beard, as if he wished to take in all that was said. But the conversation was limited to simple friendly enquiries and expressions of desire for mutual welfare. Then Debír-ul-Mulk stated that the Amír Shír Ali Khán would undoubtedly be glad to receive the ambassadors of the great White Czar. Then, having talked for a few minutes longer, both Generals went away, pleading fatigue after the journey.

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After supper the General, in speaking of the Afgháns, to my no small astonishment, now characterised them in a severe and unattractive manner. They were, according to his words, bold robbers and plunderers. "Their treachery," said he, "has become a proverb: an Afghán son will, without a prick of conscience, kill his father, sell him, &c." Owing to this the General recommended the Mission to take the greatest care in their relations with the Afgháns. Besides the ordinary Cossack guard another was established. But the precautionary measures were not restricted to this. The General proposed to establish a nightly watch also from amongst the members of the Mission. Each of us was to be on duty for 1½ hours. We all agreed to the proposal. The General himself wished to take the duty equally with the others, but the remaining members of the Mission would not agree to this. It would not have been proper to permit the head of the Mission, already oppressed with the weight of responsibility for everything and every one, to still further burden himself with night duty. We consequently begged the General

* I can't make out what this word is intended for; it is either some Persian or Pushtu word corrupted by the author, who knew neither language.—*Translator.*

to give up his turn of duty, and only obtained his consent after long persistency. I was appointed from 10 to 12 at night. The extra ½ hour was given me because this time was the easiest for duty. However, a considerable part of my watch I did not pass alone; the General shared my loneliness. He sat on the terrace with me for a long time relating various episodes of the lately finished Russo-Turkish war, in which he had been, as we know, no mean participator. He described in sharp outline the retreat of Gurko's detachment after the affair under Eski-Zágra. His comparison of Turkey, after the second Plevna and Shipka, to a crow dressing its feathers, was in my opinion very characteristic. In fact, Turkey, even in the event of a decisive success over us, would never have been able to be, not only an eagle, but even a falcon; she could only have been a bloodthirsty crow. Long did I listen about the bravery of the Russian soldier, which had passed into a proverb, his constant readiness to sacrifice himself for those about him, whether under the mouth of a Krupp gun or under the snow-storms of the wild mountain defiles. It appeared as if the General himself lived over again those moments of suffering of the army. Having heard to repletion various opinions for and against the Bulgarians, owing to their conduct relative to the Russian army during the war, I naturally wished to ascertain the General's opinion about them, as he was a person who had more to do with the Bulgarians that almost any one else. He commanded the Bulgarian militia.

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As soon as the hand of my watch had turned 12 I at once woke up the topographer, who had to relieve me on watch. It was very hot and stifling in the "yurts," but I went to sleep. The sun was already high when I awoke on the morning of the following day. The night—our first on Afghán soil—had passed without any incident. In our little camp the usual bustle of camp life was going on.

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The General went to pay a visit to the Afghán officials. He went alone, and the remaining members of the Mission remained at home. I employed myself in opening the barometer, which I had not used up to the present time because our route through Bukháran territory was already barometrically fixed at many points. But here, in Afghánistán and especially in its northern part, there are hardly any barometic observations, even English ones. But it was not fated for me to supplement this scanty information. With the greatest care I commenced to take off the case and the packing of felt. In taking off the cover I perceived some ominous little globules of mercury. In opening the two halves of the wooden box of the barometer the globules of mercury scattered like hail in different directions. I was almost numb with grief. The Colonel, who had come up during the operation, phlegmatically said "Bad." The first glance cast at the tube of the barometer convinced me that the tube itself was whole. I tried to convince myself of this. It was actually quite whole, but there was only half the column of mercury in it It appeared that the barometer was issued from the Topographical Department old and had been several times repaired; through a badly mended crack part of the mercury had flowed out. The vexation which possessed me can only be imagined by a man who has been placed in a similar position. This vexation was increased

by the fact that it was impossible to remedy it, for not a drop of spare mercury had been brought. If there had been, at all events I could have tried to fill the tube again with mercury. But now there was nothing to be done.

The General quickly returned from the Afghán camp and informed us that it had been decided to start that evening at 6 P.M. and travel on throughout the night. This night march was decided on in view of avoiding the heat of the day, which was here positively unbearable. The Turkumán desert runs in like a gulf between the bank of the Amú and the spurs of the Paropamisus. Our route to Mazár-i-Sharíf lay across this gulf for a distance of 50 versts (33⅓ miles). This decision was a very unwelcome one to the topographer. To make a sketch of the route at night was a difficult task, but there was no help for it. Exactly at 6 P.M. we mounted our horses.

Half sections right, march—was the word of command of the sergeant, and 22 Cossacks and 4 servants followed us in a string along the narrow road. The baggage followed separately; it was on this occasion left without any protection from the Cossacks, even the servants were not left with it: the care of it was entrusted to the *jigits* and drivers. The protection was entirely confided to the Afghán infantry and cavalry soldiers. It appears to me that this arrangement was open to criticism; it might have happened that we should have been left without any baggage. For even if the Afgháns had not plundered our things, the drivers themselves, taken chiefly from Bukháran territory, without any guarantee for good behaviour on their side, might have done so and shared our property with the Afghán guards. This they could have done all the more easily that the baggage was wholely separated from us and travelled at night. If the General had it in view to keep all the Cossacks and servants together, and thus increase the defensive power of the Mission, it appears to me that object was not attained. In the event of treachery from the Afgháns and their attacking us, what could 30 men do against 300 Afgháns in the open plain, in a locality quite unknown to us, in the darkness of night. It is evident that in entering Afghánistán with such an insignificant, merely honorary escort, as 22 Cossacks, it was necessary to place full reliance on the good will of the fierce mountaineers. On leaving the village we met both the Afghán Generals with their suites and a long tail of horsemen. The greater part of these wore conical, shaggy fur caps, and they were all armed with muzzle-loading rifles.

Many of them had in addition pistols and long knives in their broad leather belts. The officers had long swords and pistols. The leading horsemen had pennants like small flags; these were fastened to long bamboo lances.

When we rode out into the open the horsemen spread out in the following manner. Part galloped out 2,000 paces and then advanced slowly; these formed the advance guard. At some distance behind us a group of horsemen, constituting the rear guard, followed. On both sides of the Mission group extended two long ranks of Afghán horsemen. Thus the Mission rode within a parallelogram of Afgháns.

I acknowledge that on finding myself in a thick crowd of Afgháns I did not feel quite easy. The Afgháns might at a given signal kill us all in a minute. I suppose I was not the only one to experience

this feeling, but no attack was made upon us. The Afgháns merely looked upon us with curiosity, and I did not see one sour, ill-favoured glance. It was evident that they watched over us carefully, not as prisoners, but more as dear, very dear guests, whose safety had been strongly impressed upon them. After proceeding a few hundred paces an unexpected halt took place. The only load which was taken along with the Mission, namely, the treasure chest, got unshipped and had to be re-loaded; upon this the General counselled us not to call it the "kazna" (treasure chest), but the money* chest. The fact was that "kazna" is a Turki word and the Afgháns might understand it, especially the Hazáras, of whom there were many amongst the horsemen. So this new title was used in order to conceal the importance of the load from our escort. We then moved on; in about half an hour's ride the locality through which we passed completely changed its character. At our former halting-place the abundance of water was perceived everywhere and dampness reigned supreme, for all round marshes were seen; now the soil had become perfectly dry, and all round there was not a drop of water. Instead of mulberry and peach trees, some poor *saksaul* bushes stuck out of the tops of the sand-hills.

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In some places the road lay over firm ground, and the horses then went along bravely, but soon afterwards they again began to sink into the sands.

Debír-ul-Mulk stopped several times, and the Mission was then also obliged to halt. The Debír became in a very cheerful frame of mind. A short time more passed, and then it became evident to us all that this respected Afghán seigneur was actually drunk. This seemed to us very surprising, for the Afgháns pass for being very religious, and the use of wine is forbidden by the Korán. Afterwards we ascertained that Debír-ul-Mulk was not an Afghán by birth but a Persian immigrant; consequently his taste for wine was quite comprehensible.

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Forty versts (26⅔ miles) were thus traversed by us over this desert, and it was impossible, as may be supposed, to ride any further. I was not the only one to feel an irresistible inclination for the arms of Morpheus. Even the merry M. was silent under the sound of the Cossack songs. Finally, the Afghán Generals could hold out no longer, and it was decided to make a short halt in an open desert on the bare sand. Heaven knows how the Afgháns contrived at once to make coffee. They probably had a certain amount of water with them. But where did they obtain the fuel to boil the water. All round there was not a stick of saksaul or blade of grass!

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The pale light of the coming day had already tinged the illimitable desert when we again started on our journey. A shivering came over me, for it was very fresh, and I had only my white uniform coat on. One might well be in danger of the unpleasant consequences of a night passed on the bare ground, *viz.*, the various forms of rheumatism, fevers, catarrhs, &c., but we did not suffer, and all went well on this occasion.

We had to ride for several hours over the same unsightly desert. All around there was not a sign of life; gradually, with each step we advanced,

* Dengi money.

the blue hills stood out to the south; to the north the outline of the Shírábád mountains were completely hidden in the foggy distance. After riding on for some time, the remnants of the ruins of an ancient town extended along both sides of the route. They occupied a space of several square versts. In places one saw the arches of gates in tolerable preservation; the remains of solitary towers rose from this group of fragments as if desiring eternally to express their protest against those guilty of this destruction. Two or three rough cupolas were pretty well preserved, and would serve for a shelter against the severity of the elements when the sandstorm here threatens to bury every living thing which comes in its way. Wonderful to relate, two or three belts of cultivation already covered with ripe, golden wheat, were seen. How could one explain the phenomenon of this ray of life in this gloomy waterless desert? The enigma was soon explained, for after riding a few versts further a mass of vegetation was seen. This mass of green, when we approached it, proved to be a large village with a broad "arík" (water channel) flowing through the middle of it.

From this "arík" a feeble stream of the life-giving water reached those patches of wheat, which refreshed the eye of the traveller wearied with the desert. It was again proved here, more than anywhere else, that water is the life of the earth. The tree vegetation of the village and its corn-fields, tinting the surrounding locality with gold for several square versts, formed a sharp contrast with the rude lifeless surface of the sandy ocean which embraced this "oasis" on all sides.

This village is called Kárshiyák. For its life, its thick vegetation and rich corn-fields, it is indebted to the canal brought from the Balkh river. This village is 50 versts (33⅓ miles) from the bank of the Amú and 40 versts (26⅔ miles) from the ruins of the town of Balkh; almost the same distance, too, separates it from Mazár-i-Sharíf. This village has about 200 houses and abounds in fruit gardens.

We were almost the first Europeans whom it had seen within its walls. Moorcroft in his journey to Bukhára passed through this village in January 1824; Burnes passed through the Turkumán desert more to the west of it to Andkhoi and Khoja Sáleh; Vambéry passed further to the west than Burnes.

What particularly struck the eye on riding into the village was the type of its houses. In every place in Turkistán, at which I had been up to this time, I had met with the usual type of square structure with flat roofs. But here the houses were almost exclusively of a dome- (cupola-) shaped form. They often have several regular spherical cupolas or domes; these have usually a small aperture in the centre to let out the smoke. These dwellings give one the impression of being stone "yurts." The village proved to be inhabited entirely by Uzbaks. This circumstance in my opinion clearly explains the shape of their dwellings.

The Uzbaks, as a nomad race, at no very distant epoch of time lived in "yurts," the usual movable dwelling of Asiatic nomads. On taking to a settled life they retained the former type of their dwellings, only made them permanent by making "yurts" of stone and mud instead of felt.*

* I would here remark that the structures in Kirghiz cemeteries—tombs—also have the usual cupola- or yurt-shaped form. Thus, although these structures are made of mud and stone, the type of their former dwelling—the "yurt"—is maintained.

Note by Translator.—The real reason for this type of house, &c., is want of timber.

We passed through the kishlak (village) and halted at its eastern edge in a garden of gigantic old apricot trees. Here "yurts" were pitched for us, and round the garden a chain of Afghán sentries was at once posted.

I wished very much to find out something about the ruins we had met with, but I was able to obtain scarcely any information. No traditions about them had been kept by the local inhabitants. Debír-ul-Mulk alone informed me that these were the ruins of the "City of the Káfirs." But what Káfirs these were, what the town itself was like, or at what time it was laid desolate, &c.—to all these questions he could vouchsafe no explanation.* Throughout Central Asia generally one is struck by the fact that local traditions scarcely ever exist. This phenomenon, however, is very natural owing to the frequent change of the tribes inhabiting it, and which is always taking place. Here one stream of population has changed for another and has completely effaced from the face of the land not only their predecessors but all their legends and traditions. The fresh comers were completely indifferent to the reminiscences which were in some way precious to, or worthy of being preserved by, the former inhabitants of the country. Consequently we cannot be surprised at the absence of national mementos, although we must regret the fact.

On this date, the 20th June (2nd July), we first became acquainted with the local sirocco—the "garm-sir," or hot wind, as they here call it.

At mid-day the temperature of the air under the shade of the "yurt" in a thick orchard reached 42·6° C. (108·7° Fahrenheit); it was noticeable that the wind was easterly, not westerly. I several times tested its direction and found that it was blowing from the east. This phenomenon was in fact a very strange one, for on the east ran masses of snowy mountains, which play the part of a natural cooling element for the vapours and air of the deserts abutting on them. Consequently a wind from the east ought to bring freshness and have a moderating influence on the temperature. On the other hand, to the west extends the enormous area of the Turánian desert, bounded by the Caspian and Ural, and extending far to the north, even up to the Siberian steppes. This locality, owing to the most complete absence of water, is, as it were, an enormous heated hearth. The winds from a westerly direction ought necessarily to bring to the eastern borders of this area a mass of heated air, and the existence of the "garm-sir" is naturally accounted for in this manner. The fact, however, was incontestable, and I propose to explain it as being caused by the reflection of this air current from the heights of the Pámír. There is no doubt that there must be here two very clearly defined strata of air currents—an upper and a lower. The upper must be formed from the air stratum borne by the west wind; the lower by the east wind. It is evident that in the present case the difference in temperature of the strata was so great that the western current—even after being reflected from the mountains of Badakshán and Wakhán, and after being cooled by the effect of the snowy mountain summits—still preserved a very considerable amount of warmth. I acknowledge that this explanation is rather far-fetched, but I see no other possibility of explaining this phenomenon. The heat increased considerably up to 3 P.M. A Chinese boy in

* I could find no traces relative to these ruins in the greater part of the Arabian and Persian geographers and historians.

the service of Z. had a stroke of the sun. Several buckets of water poured over him and some other remedies soon brought him to himself.

The next day the sound of the trumpet and the deep notes of the drum again echoed forth and let us know that it was time to get mounted. The route now lay through villages, which occasionally occurred on our further course. In places small golden fields extended round. Occasionally one might meet an Uzbak with his family collecting his wealth, *i.e.*, corn, but the road was still generally of a uniformly desert character.

At one place we passed by some rather high mounds of débris with remnants of fort walls preserved intact, and round this mound one could perceive a ditch not yet quite filled in; but about these ruins, as in the case of others, no traditions had been preserved.

At 25 versts (18⅔ miles) from Kárshiyák the halting-place for the night had been prepared by the Afgháns at the village of Maidán. Our tents were pitched alongside of the Afghán fortlet built here. One of these tents especially attracted our attention. It was a very large, square one, with a conical top, the side of the square being 5 to 6 sajénes (35 to 42 feet); the top of the tent up to the open of the cone was 2½ sajénes (19½ feet), and it was made of canvas.

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It was evident that the Afgháns wished to please us in every way and were not stinting in their attentions. Amongst other things they promised in case of necessity to give us their horses and transport generally for the baggage. At the same time they strove to entertain their guests in a fitting manner. If in Bukhára our table was loaded with an enormous quantity of meats and drinks, the greater part of which were not according to European taste, one could not say the same of the Afghán kitchen. The food was prepared in a perfect manner, worthy of other surroundings than the desert in which we were. The so-called "kabáb" was simply excellent.

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On this day an express came from Kilif. The Beg of that town sent a special messenger with a letter to the commandant of the Mission. In this letter the Beg, who was quite unknown to us, expressed to the General, equally unknown to him, his best wishes for our onward journey. No doubt this Beg acted thus by order of the Amír of Bukhára. But this circumstance formed in its way a sign of the times. The Bukháran governor of a town 200 versts (133⅓ miles) from us sends his messenger to make his compliments to the Russian General who is passing by? The messenger was kept with the Mission until its arrival at Mazár-i-Sharíf. It was necessary that he should see himself how the Afgháns would receive the Russian embassy, and that he should relate all he had seen to his Beg, who again would not delay in reporting everything to the Amír of Bukhára.

We had yet to make two short day marches to Mazár-i-Sharíf, the last being only 15 versts (10 miles). The Afgháns kept to the same rules as the Bukhára neighbours relative to ceremony and honours, as indeed all Asiatics do; the greater delay, the greater the honour.

On the 23rd June (5th July) we entered the capital of the Chahár Viláyat or Afghán Turkístán, Mazár-i-Sharíf. The evening before a great deal had been said in our circle about the coming reception of the Russian Mission. The Afgháns smiled enigmatically. The Kemnáb

informed us that all the troops quartered at Mazár-i-Sharíf and the neighbouring fortress of Takht-i-pul would meet the Mission. It was presumed that the Luïnab himself with a numerous suite would come out on an elephant to meet the Mission. At 6 in the morning of this day (7th July) we mounted and rode towards the mass of vegetation, looking dark towards the south-east. The air was very clear, so that we could easily distinguish at the distance of 10 miles two golden domes rising from a mass of gardens. This was the "Mazár," or shrine in which, according to local tradition, lie the bones of the Musalman legendary hero-saint Ali. This tradition, however, is not only held by the Musalmans of the Chahár Viláyat. Amongst the inhabitants of the Bukhára territories, and even of Russian Turkístán, pilgrimage to the supposed sepulchre of Ali at Mazár-i-Sharíf is very general.*

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Nearer the mountains, which apparently rose steeply immediately behind Mazár-i-Sharíf, were seen more or less considerable villages, and in some places the walls surrounding some of the little places glittered in the sun. One of these, situated on one side of the town and due south of it, was surrounded by a long and high wall. This is Takht-i-pul, the focus of Afghán power in the Chahár-Viláyat. The Afgháns riding with us spoke enthusiastically of this fortress. According to them it was quite unassailable.

In the meantime the town became more and more clearly defined. One could already distinguish large detached trees; some high houses raised their flat roofs above the foliage of the tower and gardens. We soon turned off from the well-beaten road to the south and went across country through the fields.

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Irrigation canals, in a thick network, covered the fields which were chiefly sown with wheat; some of these were pretty wide and deep. Jumping over one of these my horse dropped his hind leg, and I almost fell into the water with him. After this we had to ride under the wall of a small fort; the wall was surrounded by a ditch filled with water. From the crenelations of the wall, which was 17½ feet high in some places, the points of the bayonets of the Afghán sentinels peeped out glittering in the sun. At the gates of the fort, situated in the south-east wall, a guard of several infantry-men saluted the Mission on their passing. We soon came out on a very well-beaten, broad and level road, with ditches dug on both sides of it. This was the main road from Mazár-i-Sharíf to Takht-i-pul and on to Balkh. At a few hundred paces from us, nearer the town, the troops were seen formed upon both sides of the road. When we approached them, two Afghán notables with their escort came to meet us at a hand galop. One of these was a tall young man of athletic build; he sat on his dappled grey Arab, English fashion. His dress consisted of a red uniform with gold lace, and a red sash over his right shoulder. On his head he wore a glittering metal helmet with plumes, with a chain under his lower lip, English fashion; at his side hung a rich sword. This horseman

* The tradition of the discovery of the tomb of Ali can be found in "Mir Abdul Karim Boukhari, Histoire de l'Asie centrale publieé traduite et annotcé par Ch Shefer. Paris, 1876, p. 74.

was Sardár Faiz Muhammad Khán; he at that time commanded all the troops quartered in the Chahár Viláyat.

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His companion was the eldest son of the Luïnáb—Kemnáb Khushdil Khán.

On riding up to the Mission both officials saluted us—the General by taking his hand, and the remaining members by raising the hand to the helmet, at the same time the trumpeters sounded on the trumpets; signals were heard, and the troops cried out a welcome to us. For several minutes the Mission halted. Then other signals were heard, and the two long lines of soldiers posted along the road moved towards the town. We had to pass by the different battalions formed on the road itself, by regiments of cavalry and batteries of artillery. When we came opposite the first battery it fired a salute of some guns; on passing the second battery the salute was repeated. Our horses were at first much startled by the unexpected reports of the guns, which were placed only a few paces from them. The General's horse, a present from the Beg of Shírábád, reared up and started to one side. The General only just kept his seat by holding on to the mane. Several Afghán soldiers at once took hold of the horse's bridle and led the frightened animal in this manner the rest of the way to our residence. We continued our way along the front of the troops up to the town. The Afghán officer following close to the Commander-in-Chief on foot from time to time called out a word of command, and the two lines of soldiers accompanying us on each side of the road now quickened and now decreased their pace. But here is the town. Its narrow and dirty streets were crowded with a mass of people, gazing at the heretofore unseen "Urus" (Russians . All this numerous crowd attentively looked with the greatest curiosity at the new men. I could read nothing but curiosity on their faces; there was not a single threatening gesture; on the contrary, it seemed to me that many expressed good wishes. After several turns in the narrow and dirty streets we reached the house appointed for us. A guard of honour met us at the gates.

The general character of this house was the same as that at Kárshí. The same mud quadrangle divided into several smaller ones—the same lofty walls shut out the inhabitants of this house from the rest of the world. The difference only consisted in this house being larger and cleaner than that at Karshí. The inner court, which covered about ½ decyátín (1·35 acres) of ground, was built with two long wings on the north and south sides, in which were a great number of badly-built rooms almost destitute of furniture.

The roofs of the wings were partly flat and partly dome-shaped. But what particularly struck the eye here was the amount of green and shade. A rather broad "arík" flowed through the centre of the court, shaded by gigantic chinars. Under the shade of these trees, on the very edge of the "arík," a raised walk* with a canopy was constructed. This "chabootra" was spread with carpets, and tea and dessert were served in it immediately on our arrival. In two corners of the court, flowers and grass were seen. When we had disposed ourselves on the "chabootra" to take a snack, the guard of honour (belonging, as

* "Estrada" probably means a "chabootra."—*Translator.*

we afterwards ascertained, to the Amír's guards) presented arms. The General then expressed himself very well pleased with the movements of the troops, only remarking that they made two or three motions in the present, which, however, are still used in the English army. The soldiers then marched past, opened their ranks and did the bayonet exercise. After this the Commander-in-Chief and son of the Luïnab—the Kemnáb, wishing the Mission a pleasant rest, left our residence.

At this time Nazirov too rejoined the Mission. He was at once overwhelmed with questions relative to his journey. He had, however, had no adventures on his journey, and had done the 100 versts (66⅔ miles) journey from our halting-ground on the Amú to the capital in 24 hours. Several Afghán horsemen and one "jigit" belonging to the Mission had accompanied him. On arrival at Mazár-i-Sharíf he was at once received by the Luïnab.

"He is," said Nazirov, "a tall old man of 60 years of age, of athletic build, with an intelligent and energetic face; he received me on his bed, pleading sickness. On receiving the letter given him by me, Shírdil Khán expressed his pleasure at the arrival of the Russian Mission, and spoke of them as of wished-for guests. To my question why the Mission had been kept on the road, he replied that he had sent a communication to the Amír relative to their journey to Kábul, but had not yet received his decision on the subject; and that he, the Luïnáb, was unable to permit them of his own accord to continue their journey further than Mazár-i-Sharíf. 'But do not think,' continued he, 'that this delay has been the result of unfriendly feelings towards you on the part of the Afghán authorities. Living here you will be convinced of my good feeling and of that of all Afgháns towards you our guests. You will be received with the honour due to the ambassadors of the great power of the White Czar. Remain here for a short time as my guests until the decision of the Amír arrives, which I do not doubt it soon will do. As regards the fact that the Mission had to halt two days on the banks of the Amú in expectation of the arrival of a suitable escort to accompany it, this measure was the result of necessity. The greater number of Afgháns, I know, joyfully receive their Russian guests, but evil persons may be found who wish to do some injury to the Russian Mission, either owing to their own folly or at the instigation of other people, for whom it would be advantageous to embroil the Afgháns with the Russians. But I, the true servant of the Amír, my lord and master, am under the obligation of presenting to him the Russian embassy safe and sound, without the least shadow of cause for displeasure on their part.'"

This is what Nazirov told us. It was impossible not to agree with the sensible words of Shírdil Khán. Especially noticeable was his idea that persons might be found in Afghánistán to whom it would be advantageous to embroil the Afgháns with the Russians. It is impossible to understand this otherwise than that he meant by these "persons"—secret spies and agents of the English.*

Nazirov then said that Shírdil Khán had himself intended to meet the Mission, but had to give up the idea owing to his illness. Again,

* We afterwards not unfrequently heard similar expressions of fear from many persons connected with the Afghán Government. How well founded these dangers were the reader will be convinced of later.

with regard to Nazirov's own reception by the Afgháns, the greatest attention had been observable in everything; nevertheless he always found himself under the careful surveillance of a guard of honour. He had heard also that at the present time there were in Mazár-i-Sharíf messengers from the Amír of Bukhára. The next day passed without anything remarkable occurring.

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Mossin Khán visited the Mission regularly every day in the morning, at mid-day, and in the evening. He generally enquired if the Mission were living well, had enough supplies, &c. The charge of the guard of honour posted at all the entrances and exits of our house was also under his care.

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The visit of the Mission to the Luïnáb, fixed for the 25th June (7th July), could not take place, as his illness increased day by day. Debír-ul-Mulk, however, and the other Afgháns expressed no fears as to the issue of his illness; on the contrary, they expressed a hope for his speedy recovery. The General offered them my services, but the offer was not accepted, as the illness, according to their account, was not so dangerous as to necessitate a foreign doctor being called in, and of course neither I nor the General insisted on my interference. On the 26th June (8th July) Khushdil Khán, the Luïnáb's son, invited us to the court. Dressed in full dress, we mounted and started, accompanied by the Debír, Mossin Khán, and a detachment of the Luïnáb's body-guard. These "guards" were dressed in blue cotton uniform and trowsers of the same; on their heads they wore blunted conical caps with four crescent-shaped, white fur strips, sown on one by one on each side of the helmet.

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The Luïnáb's palace was about 1,000 paces from the house which we occupied. A considerable part of this distance was occupied by a clover field; immediately beyond it rose the mud wall forming the outer barrier of the Luïnáb's residence. We rode through the broad gates and entered a rather large but new garden, which we continued to ride up until we came to a more open space with two large, well-plastered wings; the western one consisted of two storeys with a tower on the flat roof; 50 paces in front of us stood a group of gigantic chinars, fringing a small basin filled with clear water. Under the shade of these giants a canopy was pitched and under this Kemnáb Khushdil Khán awaited us.

We dismounted and gave our horses to the attendants following us, and, accompanied by a dozen Cossacks, went towards the group of "chinars" (plane trees). Khushdil Khán came several steps forward to meet us, shook hands with all the members of the Mission, and invited us to come under the canopy. Under this were placed several arm-chairs of rough construction, but these were not enough for all of us. The deficiency was made up, but apparently with some difficulty. The Debír sat down with the Kemnáb, but Mossin Khán continued to stand at a respectful distance from us. The day was fine and hot, and there was not the least breath of wind.

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A lively conversation was carried on between the General and Khushdil Khán, the former occasionally turning to the interpreter for assistance. The remaining members of the Mission who did not know Per-

sian only took part in the conversation by contemplating the persons conversing. Fortunately I sat alongside of Zamán Beg, who translated the whole conversation for me almost word for word.

Khushdil Khán informed us that the illness of the Luïnáb unfortunately still continued, and that no amelioration was perceptible. "But," continued he, "Inshallah, the illness will soon pass off." According to the native doctors, as Khushdil Khán informed us, the illness was of such a character as indicated a nine days' sickness. If that day (9th day) passed without any results, then 11 or 14 days. He also said that in the event of a happy issue of the illness, the sick man would sweat profusely on the appointed day, and after that sleep a great deal. "Now, however," continued the Kemnáb, "the Luïnáb is in a state of unconsciousness and eats nothing."

The form of his illness interested me very much and I offered my services. The General again proposed to Khushdil Khán to avail himself of my visits, but now, as before, the proposal was not accepted.

"We have good doctors," said Khushdil Khán, "and they promise to put him on his legs again in a few days." The General, however, expressed to him his doubts of the skill of the native doctors, and continued to insist on my intervention. "Listen, General sahib," replied Khushdil Khán; "I do not doubt that your doctors know more than ours. But nevertheless I consider it inexpedient to call in your doctor to my patient, and these are the reasons: our doctors would be offended at the intrusion into their sphere of a foreign doctor, and might altogether refuse to attend the sick person further. Then what should we do when you have gone?"

The argument put forward by Khushdil Khán was a weighty one. The native doctors would not in fact have accepted my friendly interference, so the General insisted no longer.

After this the "chāichī" or "chāī-khān," a person who has charge of making tea, gave us all cups with an aromatic mixture of green tea. One must note here that the Afgháns as well as the Bukhárans drink almost exclusively green tea. After tea the conversation was renewed relative to the impending journey of the Mission to Kábul. Khushdil Khán again repeated the assurance that the Amír Shír Ali Khán would be excessively glad to see his "Russian guests." To this he added that the Luïnáb himself would probably accompany the Mission to Kábul, as his recovery was, according to the native doctors, indubitable. According to the Kemnáb, it was necessary for the Luïnáb to go to Kábul also upon his own affairs. He had to furnish the Amír with the annual revenue from the Chahár Viláyat. The amount of the taxes which the Luïnáb had to take to the Amír was very considerable. The taxes consisted of several thousand horses, 800 camels, and one "lakh" of rupees. The trustworthiness of these figures, however, is open to some doubt.*

Wishing the Luïnáb a quick recovery, we took leave of Khushdil Khán and returned by the same route to our sun-baked mud quadrangle. After this visit the Mission remained awaiting news from Kábul. We even tried to calculate where the post messenger might be at a given time,

* I afterwards ascertained from trustworthy persons that the whole amount of the revenue paid to the Amír by the population of Afghánistán-Turkistán, including the expense of the local administration, amounted to R36,00,000.

guided by the following data: The Afgháns assured us that the "chappar" (mounted post) could do the distance from Mazár-i-Sharíf to Kábul, about 550 versts (366⅔ miles), in three days. Three days there and three back, and we calculated on perhaps two days at Kábul—this would be eight days. Six days had now passed since the report of the arrival of the Russian Mission had been sent by Shírdil Khán, so it was evident we should have to wait another two days. Our calculations, however, proved inaccurate, as we had to wait ten whole days in our "mud palace" under a guard of honour.

The time passed somehow; sitting listlessly in our walled-in quadrangle became wearisome. From the terrace-like roofs, on which one could conveniently walk, a view opened out over the town and surrounding locality. Around our residence extended a vast island of vegetation, abounding in trees. Amongst the thick growth of the gardens were seen the dome-shaped and flat roofs of the houses. The whole town looked like a large apiary with beehives standing up in it. To the south, about 20 versts (13⅓ miles) off, commenced the steep bluffs of the Paropamisus, which divides into two branches in the meridian of Balkh. The dark-grey masses of rock, piled one over the other, loftily raise their peaks, but nevertheless do not reach the line of eternal snow. On the north-east and in part on the west, the unbounded Turánian desert surrounded the town with its deadly embrace.

I and several other members of the Mission much wished to go through the town and its environs. The town especially interested me, as it was the first Afghán town which I had seen. A mass of questions referring to it required to be practically settled. It would have been interesting to visit the bazars, markets, schools, and barracks here, but this wish was not destined to be fulfilled. The General would not consent to our walking in the town, fearing the fanaticism of the population which might be generally excited against Europeans whoever they might be. The Debír and Mossin Khán confirmed the General's opinion, so we all sat listlessly the whole time between the four walls. The 29th June (9th July) was a day of surprise for us, and moreover a surprise of a very unpleasant character; on this day the Luïnáb Shírdil Khán died. I say "surprise" because the Afgháns carefully concealed from us the Luïnáb's dangerous condition of health; on the contrary, they constantly assured us of his rapid recovery from sickness. "In two or three days the Luïnáb would have the pleasure of accompanying our guests to Kábul," said they the evening before his death.

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The Debír said that even if the permission of the Amír for our further journey were received from Shír Ali Khán, we should still have to wait some days at Mazár-i-Sharíf until the appointment of another Luïnáb. They also said that on the death of a Luïnáb all his property was sealed up and sent to the Amír's treasury. If the Amír thinks fit, he gives the property to the heirs of the Luïnáb, but perhaps he may not do so, in which case the means of livelihood of the bereaved family are very straitened, unless the Amír gives the sons of the deceased leading posts in the administration of the district. There were reckoned to be many candidates for the post of Luïnáb, amongst them the eldest son of the late one, Kemnáb Khushdil Khán.

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We continued to lead our monotonous life between four walls. The former harem was changed, as it were, into a monastery.

We had much spare or rather idle time on our hands. During these days I read through Gregoriev's Kábulistán and Káfiristán and Burnes' Kábul from beginning to end, and even tried to read Alexander of Macedon's campaigns in the French translation. But this was not enough. I wrote down from the General's dictation many Persian words and learnt them by heart; the General had besides a Persian grammar with French text, and I set to work at this. Soon, however, my attention was turned into another channel. The natives with various diseases commenced to come to me, and I refused no one my most strenuous aid. I was only sorry that there were cases in which, with all my desire, I could do nothing. In this category were the following cases. They brought me a young man of 23, suffering from *pneumonia catarralis chronica*. The sick man was a nephew of the late Luïnáb. It is evident that my position was a very ticklish one in this case. It was necessary, at any cost, to show the difference between a native sorcerer (quack) and a European doctor. On the curing of this sick man depended my reputation amongst the natives. The subject, however, who was to serve as the crucial test was not at all a suitable one. It will be understood that in this case it was necessary to cause a salutary effect, even though a temporary one, so I brought into play all the artillery of the pharmacopœia used in such cases. Then I advised the young man to change his place of residence. In the spurs of the Paropamísus might be found some rather elevated valley with a sufficiently equable climate. Moreover, it was easy enough to advise, but not by any means so easy to make the sick man and his relations understand what he ought to do,—what sort of place he should select; for they had no knowledge of the measurement of height by feet, or of temperature by degrees of the thermometer. In changing his residence too the patient must drink "kumis," but it appeared that the respected sons of Afghánistán have no knowledge of it.

"Do not a number of Uzbaks live in your country," asked I, "especially in the Chahár Viláyat? Perhaps the Afgháns do not know that the Uzbaks prepare "kumis?"

To this question I received a negative and in addition a contemptuous remark about the Uzbaks.

Nevertheless I advised them to avail themselves of the service of an Uzbak who knew something about it, but I do not know whether my advice was taken or not. Probably not, if one considers the unlimited hatred of the Uzbak for the Afghán on the one side, and the extreme contempt and oppression of the Uzbaks by the Afgháns on the other.

After this many other sick persons, both of the ruling Afgháns and the Uzbaks, came to me. Altogether about 100 men came to me during the stay of the Mission in Mazár-i-Sharíf. But this was not the whole number of sick who wished to avail themselves of the aid of the "doctor sahib," even though he were a "Káfir." I afterwards ascertained that the Afghán guard, who carefully watched all the entrances and exits of our "palace," would not permit many sick to come to me.

Amongst the sick, fevers prevailed over all other forms of sickness. Of the type of fevers I will speak below when I mention the sick of the Mission itself. There were also cases of other kinds of sickness. Thus they brought me a little girl of 3 years of age with a gangrenous sore on

her neck. This was "*Noma*," developed in the child after small-pox. This was, however, the only case of small-pox noticed by me in Afghánistán, although I knew that in 1877-78 a severe small-pox epidemic had occurred in Central Asia. They also brought me a boy of 8 with a terrible sore on the knee joint. The injury was so large and deep that the cartilage of the right condyle of the left thigh was laid completely bare and you could feel it with your fingers. This was also a case of constitutional syphilis after fever. Diseases of the eye were almost as frequent. I will not, however, here give the forms of disease met with by me in this town. I will speak of them in another place.

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On the 1st July (13th) the General became ill. His illness began with a feverish chill; the temperature under his armpit was about 102·2° F. The type of fever was daily with remissions (lessening) in the mornings. He was sick for three days.

At this same time the Cossacks began to get sick. Some of them had very severe attacks of fever, with great vomiting, delirium, and even convulsive contraction of the extremities. Up to the 6th (18th) July, 18 out of 48 persons in the Mission got sick. The prevailing type of fever appeared to me an original one, and up to this time I had never before observed it. Here are some examples of the temperature of the sick observed day by day at certain fixed hours :—

Cossack Bailonosov—

Day of illness.	Morning from 8 to 10.	Evening from 4 to 6.
1st day	101·48	103·28
2nd „	102·2	104·9
3rd „	102·2	104·9
4th „	97·7	98·6

This example shows that the feverish condition lasted three days, with considerable lowering of temperature in the mornings. This is the simple form of "febris continua quotidiana," or daily continuous fever. Here is an example which gives lowering of temperature in the mornings every other day :—

Cossack Kuznetzov—

Day of sickness.	Morning. Same hours as before.	Evening.
1st day	103·82	104·9
2nd „	97·7	104·54
3rd „	100·4	102·02
4th „	98·6	100·4
5th „	97·7	98·6

This type of fever I call daily remittent fever (febris quotidiana remitens). I give another example of this type :—

Cossack Fofanov—

Day of sickness.	Morning. Same hours as before.	Evening.
1st day	103·1	104·18
2nd „	98·24	101·3
3rd „	99·5	100·76
4th „	98·6	99 14

These two types were the prevailing ones observed by me. The simple form of intermittent fever every third day was also met with by me,

but there were only 6 cases out of the 26 amongst the Mission. The highest temperature was 106·16 under the armpit, but this was only observed by me once in a case of triurnal intermittent fever. Knowing beforehand, from the accounts of other persons, that I should have to deal with the celebrated Balkh fevers on this route, I had to turn my special attention to the hygienic surroundings of places at which we made our halts. Here in Mazár-i-Sharíf too I kept to my programme, and the quadrangle was kept as clean as possible.

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Notwithstanding these measures the men began to sicken, and every day there were fresh sick. It was impossible to explain it otherwise than by admitting the existence in these parts of endemic malaria, which, prevailing in the town, necessarily produced its effect also on our quadrangle. I will afterwards review this question in detail, and will now continue my chronicle of events.

When the sickness of the persons composing the Mission attained a certain proportion, I advised the General to take the Mission out of the town on to the open steppe, but my proposition was not accepted. The General did not think it advisable to carry out my suggestion, but why he did not explain; I can only presume it was on the strength of a falsely conceived delicacy relative to the Afgháns that he thus allowed the sickness of the members of the Mission and attendants to increase amid the miasma of the town. It must be remarked generally that the General did not show independence in his relations with the Afgháns.

As an instance of the General giving in to this falsely conceived delicacy which I allude to, I can adduce the following:—

From the date of the first arrival of the Mission in Afghán territory it had been obliged to receive its means of subsistence from the Afghán authorities. This continued all the time we were at Mazár-i-Sharíf. Everything necessary for the table of the Mission was sent by the authorities, and they generally sent ready-prepared dishes. I have nothing to say against the nourishing qualities and quantity of the dishes of Afghán cookery, but the method of preparing them was not always in accordance with Russian tastes, however well the food might be prepared. Even the excellent pilau one might get tired of when eaten daily. After a few days one could see that the members of the Mission hardly touched the dishes. It seems to me that it would have been quite natural to make a Russian kitchen and prepare Russian cookery from the materials supplied by the Afgháns. This could have been all the easier that the Mission had at its disposal two tolerable cooks, a camp cooking range, and every requisite for the purpose. The matter, however, did not seem so simple, for in the General's opinion to make a Russian kitchen would be unadvisable, because "the Afgháns might be offended by our thus, as it were, disliking (being squeamish about) their bread and salt."

In our residence there was very little furniture; not a single chair, for the Afgháns do not use them at all. We had our camp furniture, and we might, and it appears to me ought to, have used it. It lay, however, unpacked in the packages, because in the General's opinion it would not have been delicate to use this furniture under the present circumstances. "This might excite the 'amour propre' of the Afgháns by bringing their poverty out in relief," explained the General.

On the 3rd July I also became ill of fever, succumbing to the general fate.

On the 4th July it was announced that the eagerly expected decision of Shír Ali Khán had been just received, and we now also ascertained that Khushdil Khán, the son of the late Luïnab, had been appointed Luïnáb.

On the 5th July we again rode to the court of the Luïnáb. Khushdil Khán received us on the same platform, under the chinars, with the same bright sunshine as on the former occasion. He now appeared more dignified than before. He entertained us with a concert, performed by his orchestre of natives—very tolerable music. Loud-toned instruments and the Turkish drum greatly predominated. On this day I again had an attack of fever, notwithstanding that I had taken a large amount of quinine as a precaution.

CHAPTER V.

In Afghán Turkistán.

Starting on our road—Afghán Artillery—Guri-Mar—The Ab-dúg pass—Naibábád—Our day's march—Garm-sir - Ancient Khulm (Tásh-kúrgán)—The gates of the Hindu Kúsh—Afghán discipline—Position of the Mission—Vorontzov and Co.'s matches—Short historical and geographical sketch of the valley of the Amú—European travellers in it.

On the 6th July (18th) at 6 A.M. the Mission left Mazár-i-Sharíf in the direction of Kábul. Debír-ul-Mulk and Mossin Khán were again told off to accompany it *en route*. We thus finally moved on after a fortnight's halt. We had to ride for a long time through the narrow and dirty streets of the town. In one place the street was so narrow that two horsemen could not ride abreast, consequently we went single file. After a short time we came out into a broader and straighter street running due east, at which we were pleasantly surprised. The street was very regularly paved with round stones and the paving extended the whole breadth of the street, which was 15 sajénes (105 feet) wide. At the corner of the bazar coming out on this street the new Luïnáb joined us with his suite. On both sides of the street, and also in front and behind us, ranks of Afghán soldiers marched.

An officer on foot, apparently an artilleryman, walked by the Luïnáb and commanded the escort. He walked with his hand on the croup of the horse upon which the Luïnáb rode.

On both sides of the street rows of inquisitive inhabitants appeared; they were not, however, so thick as on the entrance of the Mission into the town. When the Luïnáb was passing the people stood up, put their hands to their foreheads, and saluted military fashion, muttering something, but sometimes calling out loud the phrase "Us-salam aleikum." The Luïnáb courteously bowed to each side in acknowledgment of the salutations. The roofs of the houses presented a rather original spectacle on this occasion; white awkward-looking figures stood on them in groups or alone. These were the most inquisitive portion of the human race—the daughters of Eve. But, good heavens! what dresses they were clothed in! Long white "chadars," exactly like shrouds, covered them closely from head to foot.

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Here we are at the "Kábul gates," rising rather high above the remnants of wall which once surrounded the town. Now the town has not got a general wall round it, but on the north-east side is a fort armed with guns. Between this fort and the Luïnáb's palace is the town bazar.

Beyond the gates the locality became quite open. To the right, in the direction of the hills, was a newly laid out park, consisting chiefly of poplar trees.

There is no doubt that this young wood has been very lately planted, as the trees are still very young. Some irrigation channels intersect the park in various directions, dividing it into several large portions.

On the left side of the road, opposite the plantation, the Afghán troops were drawn up. As soon as we approached them, firing commenced from the guns, one after the other. When the firing ceased the guns limbered up and advanced at full gallop, then when a few yards from us they wheeled to the right and continued on parallel to the road. It was a fine sight to see the fiery horses put into a gallop and carrying the guns along like a whirlwind. The General expressed a wish to inspect the guns, and in consequence accompanied by the Colonel he went towards them at a sharp gallop and I followed them at a trot, as I also wished to see the guns and was weak from fever. We saw guns of two kinds of different calibre. Two of the guns, out of the eight there, were steel rifled, and, as the Colonel said, of a calibre equal to the 4-pr. These guns were breech-loaders; the breech was closed by a breech block having the shape of a parallelogram. According to the Colonel the construction of these guns was very imperfect. "I would not risk taking them into action," he observed.

The Luïnáb said, and with evident pride, that these guns were made at Kábul in the Amír's own arsenal. At this remark the Colonel observed that this was very probable, as the English do not make such indifferent guns. Of course he made this remark in his mother-tongue, which was as intelligible to the Afgháns as Chinese grammar.

The other guns were copper* smooth-bore guns, muzzle-loaders. Their calibre corresponded about with that of our 9-prs. The Colonel expressed a better opinion on these than on the first, and traced them in a direct line to English workmen and English arsenals. I did not then notice if they were stamped or not, but the Luïnáb said that they had been given to the Amír at some time by the English. After this flying inspection of the Afghán field artillery we again moved forward. When we reached the last line of troops the Luïnáb wished us a prosperous journey, bade us farewell, and returned back to his capital, Mazár-i-Sharíf. The Debír, Mossin Khán, and a respectable Afghan escort remained with us. This escort consisted of 300 horse and 200 foot.

The road along which we continued our route ran due east from the town. It was very well levelled and had the appearance of being paved, but it was only "the appearance." The road was about 70 feet wide, with ditches on both sides, but at this time of year without water. Here and there along the edges of the ditches were some very thin willow bushes, and beyond them was seen our old friend the steppe extending far and wide. Some wretched stumps of grass burnt up by the sun covered the face of the steppe like a stubbly brush.

At a few versts from Mazár-i-Sharíf we had to cross a bridge, thrown over a rather broad "arík." This bridge is called Sar-i-pul, which means the "bridge-head." Judging from its name one would have imagined that some fortification existed here defending the bridge, but instead of a fortification a wretched hovel exists on the bridge in which there is a mill. After this, throughout the whole length of the

* Probably bronze.—*Translator.*

day's journey the "arík" extended along on our left for a distance of about 16 versts (10⅔ miles). At this distance from Mazár-i-Sharíf is the point of Gur-i-Már (Darra-i-Már), the valley of snakes. Gur-i-Már is a group of half-ruined houses, and a very small group too. A very large barrack filled with Afghán soldiers then strikes the eye.

A large Indian tent, ready pitched, here awaited the Mission. This was very convenient. Weakened by the previous evening's attack of fever, I was so wearied during the march that immediately on reaching the halting-ground I threw myself on the carpet and slept like a log.

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On the following day we again started very early. On this day we had to make a much longer march than on the previous one. From Gur-i-Már to Naibábád, the place fixed on for our halt, was reckoned about 25 versts (16⅔ miles). The first 7 or 8 versts (4⅔ to 5⅓ miles) runs over soft steppe ground, but afterwards a gentle ascent commences to the Ab-dúg pass. This pass will be found shown on all maps. But it is not really a pass at all, but a series of small hillocks almost parallel to each other, through which the road lies. This range of hillocks occupies a belt about 10 versts (6⅔ miles) broad. They commence from the steeply rising northern spurs of the Paropamisus, approximately half way between Mazár-i-Sharíf and Khulm (Tásh-Kúrgán). This belt of low hills extends northwards almost to the Amú. Along the road, which passes from one hillock on to the other and descends from one ravine to another, in some places thickly strewn with pebbles and cobble stones, are placed three forts, or more accurately watch-towers. In the central tower, standing on almost the highest hillock, there is a well of such good quality that the pass itself has received its name from it.*

What were these towers for? The Afgháns call them "kilah," or forts. They explained to me that the existence of these towers was owing to the necessity of protecting travellers passing through this pass, as in former times robbery was very frequent here.

It is here seasonable to remark on the inaccuracies which have crept into the map of the Turkistán military district, compiled by the Turkistán Topographical Department. On this map (issue of 1877) two roads are shown through the transverse ranges just crossed by us, one through the Ab-dúg pass to Afzalábád, and the other to Gur-i-Már and Naibábád, turning the pass on the north. This is where the mistake is. The road through Gur-i-Már and Naibábád is the only one, and runs through Gur-i-Már to the Ab-dúg pass and then descends to Naibábád. Of the village of Afzalábád I heard nothing. It may perhaps be that Naibábád is sometimes called Afzalábád.

But here is Naibábád. We were located in the court of a large barrack. In the centre of the court was a large reservoir of water, with a stream of water flowing out of a stone spout. The basin was lined with stone. On the west and east sides of the court were planted rows of trees.

The court was well watered, and round the basin were pitched several tents, amongst which that intended for the Mission rose above

* "Ab-dúg" is nothing but water mixed with curd and whey, a very pleasant, cooling drink, much used in Afghánistán.

the others. This one was placed at the very edge of the basin and its sides were raised up. The floor as usual was spread with carpets and felts. Its double conical top gave sufficient protection from the burning vertical rays of the sun. I always had a greater liking for this tent than for the "palaces" of the Central Asian rulers. Some pyramidal-shaped tents, pitched a little way off, were intended for the Cossacks and servants. The Debír, Mossin Khán, and their suite were located in a neighbouring court.

Our travelling day henceforward usually passed with few exception in the following manner. The Debír with the Mission went straight from the march to our tent, into which he invited us to enter. We enter and all sit down, *à la Musulman*, cross-legged, for furniture in the tent there is none. The Chái-khán at once comes in, brings and makes tea; breakfast too appears at once, consisting of milk, cream, "mast" (a particular kind of preparation of sour milk), bread and eggs. The Debír and Mossin Khán drink tea apart from us from their own cup, and eat the same food as we do from the general dish. At breakfast unimportant conversation about the march just done, the horses, yesterday's march, &c., passes. After breakfast the Debír gets up with the words "General Sahib, *Wakt ast istarāhat kardan*" (it is time to rest).

He then leaves the Mission and goes out. Mossin Khán also rises and goes out, or else remains for some time and continues chatting with the General in Persian. But in going to his own tent he never forgets to personally visit the sentries and satisfy himself that they are all in their places, and woe to him whom he observes wrong! We dine at 3 to 4 in the afternoon, and sometimes later. We dine alone. The Debír does not appear until evening, when he generally comes again to visit the Mission, drinks afternoon tea with us, and sits with us for usually about two hours. I must say that the Debír soon acquired the sympathy of the members of the Mission generally. One cannot say the same of Mossin Khán. Notwithstanding the punctuality with which he fulfilled the duties entrusted to him, and his care for the Mission,—notwithstanding his unceasing watch over our safety,—he lost more and more the good opinion of the members of the Mission, with one important exception, however—the commander of the Mission was apparently much pleased with him.

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The moderate temperature of the morning was succeeded by a hot day. In the afternoon the so-called "garm-sir" came on in full force. This is what this phenomenon consists in. After several days of perfect calm a moderate west wind commences to blow. The longer it blows the hotter it gets. At last the heat reaches such a pitch that it seems as if you were in a heated stove. The wind actually burns you with its fiery blast. Woe to the traveller if this wind commences in the sandy desert! Here, besides the terrible heat, he will also have to fight with clouds of the finest heated sand, borne along by the wind. This sand penetrates everywhere; there is no saving oneself from it,—eyes, ears, mouth, nose, all become filled with heated saltish* sand. It becomes difficult to breathe; the heat reaches a maximum. The dusty gloom envelopes the traveller and forces him to abandon further

* Central Asian deserts are in many cases dried up salt-licks.

attempts to continue his way. In this form the "garm-sir" is called "tab-bad."

In the present instance we were in an excellent tent giving capital shade. The place was pretty well sheltered from the wind by the walls of the court and by the trees. Finally, the most important point of all, there was plenty of water.

Nevertheless the temperature in the shade of our tents at 1 in the day reached 110½°, and at 3 P M. 111¾°. What must the temperature have been in the open on the steppe? I am afraid to make any guess at it. Men overtaken by this "blast of death" in the desert rarely survive; and even in the villages and towns there are cases of death from it, as Mossin Khán told me. These winds prevail in the Chahár Viláyat from the middle of June to the middle of August. Similar winds are also observed in Russian Turkistán. The town of Khojand suffers severely from them for a certain period annually, and they are also felt even at Kokán and Táshkand. I have not mentioned the Cis-Amú localities, as there they form a common feature. In the Chahár Vilayat these winds blow for two or three days together, rarely more; sometimes they only continue for a few hours, but frequently recur.*

"How are you, doctor?" said the General, turning to me.

"Not much better," replied I. "For the effect of the quinine makes itself very little felt."

The topographer laid down his route, looking at the thermometer every hour. Owing to my great weakness from fever, I could not take the temperature. I tossed on the carpet from side to side, for in my weak state this high temperature produced a suffocating effect upon me. My mouth was dried up; it was difficult to breathe; my head was like lead. I drank iced water with extract of cranberry (?) almost every moment. It was not I alone who suffered so much. The sick Cossacks were not in a better plight than I was, but they did not complain of their sufferings so loudly and pusillanimously as I did; they only lay there and drank iced water. At 7 P.M. the temperature had fallen to 95°, and now one could breathe freely. What a difference a fall of 17 degrees does make.

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In order to avoid the heat of a march by day our departure was fixed for 2 A.M. It was calculated that we should reach Tásh-Kúrgán (Khulm) early in the morning.

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At 2 A.M. the trumpet sounded—the usual signal now for our start.

Notwithstanding that it was night, the temperature was pretty high. A light breeze was blowing from the mountains, but it only gave us heated air. The atmosphere generally reminded one at this time of a Russian steam-bath. One could have ridden not only without one's upper coat but without one's linen. I only had on a silk shirt, but still was all in a sweat. We rode very slowly. Twice on the road we came across "Chappar-khána" (post stations).

* It is noticeable that English travellers in the Amú valley do not even mention this wind, and it is only Lieutenant Irvine, in his "Memoirs of Afghánistán," who says that these hot winds are known in Bukhára (Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. VIII, p. 786). Nevertheless even Roy Gonzales de Clavicho speaks of this phenomenon.

About 6 in the morning we commenced to ride through ruins scattered over several square versts. These were the ruins of Khulm proper, which formed, about two centuries ago, a rather populous city.* The buildings were well preserved. They are almost all of the "yurt" shape, built of unburnt bricks. However, the village is not completely deserted. I saw some "stone yurts," as I call these houses, inhabited.

From the ruins of Khulm to Tásh-Kurgán it is reckoned to be about 8 versts (5⅓ miles). The road gradually approaches the hills, and at the town itself is quite close to them. For several versts before reaching the town the road is strewn with fine and coarse pebbles. A rather large "arík" (irrigation channel) extends along the north side of the road, irrigating the fields around, from which the grain (wheat) at this time had been already cut.

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At 5 versts from the town a rather strong south wind commenced to be felt. This was not the hot wind of the desert which had suffocated us with its burning blast for a whole 24 hours; it was a pretty fresh hill breeze blowing from the Khulm defile which we saw due south of us. When we rode into the town, the chief part of which was situated on the north of this defile, the wind attained considerable force. This wind, with small variations in its strength, generally blows here every day up to 11 or 12 o'clock. After 12 it sinks entirely. Before entering the town† we had to ride for several hundred sajénes through a cemetery. The enormous number of graves scattered over several square versts bears witness to the considerable mortality in the town here, and perhaps also to the antiquity of its population.

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Here we are in the open space embracing the city on three sides in a crescent; on the fourth side, *viz.*, the west, it is hemmed in by the cemetery. On the eastern side of the open area, on the other side of the Khulm stream, which is here 20 sajénes (140 feet) wide and several feet deep, rises the citadel of the town "Kurgán." This is really Tásh-Kurgán (the stone fort, literally translated), because the chief tower (castle) of the citadel is a natural fortification, and consists of a rock about 15 sajénes (105 feet) high. Alongside of this rock are placed the barracks and other buildings in which the local troops live. The whole is surrounded by a rather high mud wall attached to the castle. They told us that there were two "paltans" (regiments) of infantry with several guns in it. These battalions were then marching about the open before our eyes. The marching was probably arranged by the local authorities in order to produce a greater impression of the Afghán power.

We were located in the Luïnáb's garden side by side with the cemetery and a fresh grave scarcely covered with earth.

Such a situation did not greatly please us, but there was nothing to be done. In the centre of the garden is the palace of the Luïráb. It consists of a square three-storeyed building with an inner court made into a

* See Moorcroft's account of this city.

† Who knows that this may not be the 'Aornos of Arian, one of the two largest cities conquered by Alexander of Macedon when he marched through the Indian Caucasus? Ἀρριάνου Ἀναβασις, Vol. III, p. 29.

flower garden. On the top of the roof is a watch tower, from which a view is obtained over the town and surrounding country. Due south gaped a black cleft in the precipitous range of hills. This was the defile of Khulm. To the east and north extended thick gardens (orchards) and empty fields. The Amú-Darya lies 20 versts (13⅓ miles) to the north of the town. The rooms of this palace were made and divided with as little ingenuity as at Mazár-i-Sharíf. A poor kind of landscape, consisting chiefly of trees and flowers, covered the walls.

About mid-day the heat reached such a pitch that we were forced to take refuge in the lowest storey of the house: a large vaulted room with a solitary small window under the ceiling, in all probability a prison, was selected by us for a sleeping room. Do not be surprised, reader, that this room was chosen by us for this purpose and not any other; at 3 P.M. the temperature in it was 91·94° F., whereas in the tents and in the upper storey at the same time it was 105·6° F. It was this difference of nearly 16° which led us to prefer the prison to any other place. It was only at 7 A.M. that the same temperature was obtained in a tent.

Night came on. Mossin Khán as usual visited the chain of sentries and stretched himself on his bear-skin spread near our tents. I had fallen asleep when I heard some dull, measured blows. At the same moment Malevinski said, "Listen, doctor; what is that?" I rose up in bed and listened. The blows were struck somewhere close by in the neighbouring bushes; at the same time some voice kept on saying something with a shade of anger in it. In a few minutes I recognised the voice—it was that of Mossin Khán. Malevinski could not restrain himself; he quietly went out of the tent and entered the bushes. He soon returned and told me that all this noise was the result of Mossin Khán punishing an Afghán sentry; he was beating him with the butt end of a rifle, and beating him cruelly without caring where the blows fell. The Afghán sentry did not say a word at this or utter a sound, and as he had been knocked down by Mossin Khán, there he lay motionless.

In a few minutes the blows ceased and voices were heard. The voice of Mossin Khán sounded somewhat uneasy; his companion said something in a low voice. I then saw four Afghán soldiers carry something past our tents wrapt in a felt.

In the morning I heard the explanation of the night's occurrence. The fact was that when we went to bed, Mossin Khán made an extra round of inspection of the Afghán guards and found one of the sentries asleep. The unfortunate man was awakened by the butt end of a rifle. The feeble entreaties of the soldier for forgiveness only had the effect of making the blows fall faster. The wretched man was beaten senseless and carried off in a felt.

This occurrence produced a deep impression on us. What barbarity! Why this severity? Why watch over us so cautiously? Was our position really not without danger? But what reason was there for this insecurity? A thousand such questions came into one's head and demanded a reply. And there was only one palpable reply, *viz.*, the sentry almost beaten to death. The permanent triple chain of sentries round the Mission,—the order of the commander not to take a single step outside this chain,—the complete isolation of the Mission,—had been imposed upon us from the Amú-Darya. The Afghán Government were treating us like some precious merchandise, which they had to pass

from hand to hand, according to a contract, safe and sound, with the loss of a heavy fine for breach of contract in case of the breakage or loss of this merchandise. We were not actually refused anything, but one always heard the word "danger" used. For instance, if any one of us wished to go a few hundred paces away from the camp, he was permitted to do so, but it was necessary to appoint a special escort, and to do so it was almost necessary to ask the special permission of the Amír. The result was that it was possible to go and at the same time impossible: a strange, incomprehensible situation. And all these strange acts, due to their care for the security of the Mission, afterwards proved to be quite superfluous.

On this day, 9th June (21st), one circumstance pleased us very much. Malevinski had run out of matches, and he was much grieved that in order to get a light he would now have to use the flint and steel alone. Rajab Ali, the caravan-báshi of the Mission, however, expressed a hope that matches ("kugurt *") could be bought in the local bazar; and in half an hour he actually produced several boxes of sulphur matches of the factory of "Vorontsovoï and Co." We of course did not expect to find this product of our country here in the very depths of Central Asia. We did not expect this phenomenon, because all the Russians had a deep conviction of the insignificance of our trading relations in Central Asia. I would add that for 10 boxes with 100 matches in each one "tenga" was paid (nominal value 20 kopecks = 7½*d.*). We afterwards found that this was not the only case of our manufactures having penetrated into Afghánistán; we afterwards saw in the Afghán markets Russian iron, Russian sugar, and many other things. But of this I will treat afterwards.

I think that now it will not be superfluous to give a short geographical sketch of that part of the Amú-Darya visited by the Mission and also of the nearest neighbouring localities.

The valley of the Amú-Darya is a very broad one. In the meridian at which we crossed it, *viz.*, from Shirábád to the northern spurs of the Hindu Kúsh beyond Mazár-i-Sharíf, it attained a breadth of 150 versts (100 miles). In some places, however, it is now broader, now narrower, getting gradually narrower, however, to the eastward, where the two massive mountain systems bordering the valley on the north and south are thrown out from the gigantic mountain tract of the Pámír. To the west it imperceptibly passes into the illimitable ocean of the Turánian desert. Almost in the centre of this valley, now inclining to the north, now to the south, flows the mightiest river of Central Asia, the majestic Amú, the Oxus of the Greeks, the Jaihún of the Arabs. Not so long ago there was much discussion as to how far this river was fitted for navigation. Almost the general opinion was that the Amú was unfit for navigation almost up to Balkh.†

* "Gogard," literally sulphur.—*Translator.*

† Nevertheless Strabo wrote that "the Oxus separating Bactria from Sogdiána is so suitable for navigation that the Indian goods carried on it easily reach Hircánia and the localities lying further off towards Pontus by means of the river."—Strabo's Geography, Vol. 2, Chap. I, S. 15. In the commencement of the fourteenth century the Arab traveller Ibn Batoutah wrote as follows relative to the navigability of the Oxus: "Durant l'été on navigue sur l'Oxus, dans les bateaux jusqu' à Termedh (on the right bank of the Oxus above Balkh), et l'on rapporte de cette ville du froment et de l'orge. Cette navigation prend dix jours à quiconque descend le fleuve."—Voyages de Ibn Batoutah traduis par Défrémery, Vol. III, p. 5.

Amongst the causes acting against navigation, and especially by steamers, the following were adduced: the rapidity of the current; the shallowness of the bed; the large number of shifting shoals; &c. The late explorations of Russian travellers (Grotenhelm, Bikov, and others) have proved that the Amú is not only generally accessible for navigation by boats but even by steamers almost up to the mouths of the River Waksh. Personally I can add little to the elucidation of this question, but nevertheless I consider myself bound to communicate what little I saw or heard on the spot about this river.

With regard to the first statement against the practicability of the river for navigation, *viz.*, the swiftness of the current, in the meridian of Chushká-Guzar the rapidity of the current is, it is true, very considerable; but this rapidity is not observable over the whole of the bed, but chiefly along the line of the main channel, nearest the Afghán shore. We did not make actual measurements as to the rapidity of the current, but it is easy to calculate it by the data at our disposal at the present time. According to Shwartz, the actual elevation of Chushká-Guzar is 800 feet, and that of the Sea of Aral 163 feet. The distance between these points is known; the breadth of the river varies from 300 sajénes (900 yards) to 2 versts (1⅓ miles). From these data it is not difficult to fix the rapidity of the current of the Amú within certain limits. The second reason, forming an obstacle to the navigation of the river, *viz.*, the shallowness of the bed, only maintains its significance in the lower part of the Amú. The late measurements made by Bikov, from the mouth of the Waksh to Chárjúi, have shown that the depth of the river is nowhere less than 7 feet. At the village of Chushká-Guzar, for instance, where the breadth is 1⅓ miles, the river has everywhere a depth of 7 feet, and in the line of the main channel, near the Afghán bank, its depth is not less than 21 feet, and perhaps even more. At another point of passage, Patta-Guzar, situated 30 or 40 versts (20 to 26⅔ miles) above the village of Chushká-Guzar, the depth of the river, with a breadth of 933 yards, is still greater. The explorations of Bikov clearly showed that the Amú may from now be included in the number of rivers more or less suitable for navigation, both by the amount of water in it as well as by the average depth of the bed.

And, in fact, it is not these fictitious causes of unsuitability which appear to have acted until now as drags to the development of Russian steam navigation on this great river. The serious and almost insurmountable impediment to the development of steam navigation consists in the almost complete absence of supplies of fuel throughout the whole length of the river. The occasional small poplar groves and bushes which are met with along its banks—as, for instance, at Patta-Guzar—can have no serious influence on the question of supplying steamers with fuel. Here there are none of those rich "saksaul" woods with which a certain part of the Syr-Darya abounds. If you add to this the fact that in the neighbouring sandy tracts on both sides of the river and in the salt tracts only some thin saksaul bushes are found, and these only in a few places, it becomes clear that this impediment of want of fuel is the most real one against the development of steam navigation. This impediment is all the more worthy of attention from the circumstance that at the present time it remains undiscovered whether there exist along the banks of the Amú, or in its vicinity, localities producing mineral fuel.

The very scanty population along its banks may also serve as another impediment to the successful development of steam navigation on this river. Between the points of settled life situated on the Amú, the distances may be reckoned not only by tens but by hundreds of miles.*

Such a scanty population along the banks of the greatest river in Central Asia at first sight appears strange. In Central Asia more than anywhere the inhabitants prize every span of irrigated land, as there is everywhere a great deficiency of it. This want is the cause of the extraordinarily scanty population along the banks of such comparatively small rivers as the Zárafshán, Chirchik, Angren, &c. It would appear as if the abundance of water in the Amú, capable of irrigating an enormous amount of land, would be the means of attracting a considerable population to its banks. But nevertheless the banks for a great distance are completely uninhabited. This strange fact is very easily explained, however, especially by a person who has seen the banks for a certain distance. The fact is that only a very narrow belt of the land lying along the banks is apparently fit for agriculture. I say "apparently fit," because the soil along the banks is covered with reeds and meadows, and appears to consist of rich black soil. But with more attentive observation it appears that nearly the whole of this belt of land is one continuous marsh; even in those places where the meadow land is not under water, it is raised so little above the level of the river that with the summer floods it is completely inundated. Thus this belt of land which is suitable for cultivation cannot for the most part be made available, and consequently, too, cannot be inhabited.

But what is met with beyond this belt of land along the banks on either side of the river? As far as I could investigate this at two points of the Amú, *viz.*, where we crossed it, I may say that, beyond the shore belt suitable for cultivation, lies lifeless, sandy, and in some places salt-soil deserts. For many versts, and sometimes for many scores of versts into the interior of the country, there extends on both sides of the river a uniform, dead locality, which under no circumstances can be fit for habitation. Thus we see why it is that, notwithstanding the abundance of water, the banks of this river are so thinly inhabited. We must, however, also add to these reasons for the paucity of the population along the banks of the Amú, the political and social causes which have occurred here in the course of so many centuries, and which in part still exist. There is no doubt that with the greater spread of the humanizing influence of Russia in Central Asia—which has had such a beneficial effect in the localities already annexed to the Empire—the valley of the great Amú, which is now an offence to God and man, will, even if it does not quickly become a flourishing tract, at all events lose to a considerable extent the wild, unattractive appearance which it now has. Man's labour can work wonders, if it is only free labour and is used for the advantage of the workers. But this condition has not previously existed here. To call to life this vast tract it will be necessary to construct irrigation canals to a large extent; and in order for this network of canals to spring into existence you must have a guarantee for the security of the work and property. Of all this here there has been up to the present no conception, or to speak more accurately there has been, but it has been forgotten long ago. Now, just look how Russia has come to the assistance

* I refer, of course, to the central and upper part of the course of the Amú.

of the people living along the banks of the ancient Jaxartes (Syr-Darya) and guaranteed its existence as a peaceful prosperous district.

Undoubtedly her civilizing mission will not be limited to this. She will also come into the valley of the Oxus (Amú-Darya) in order here too to call to life mankind which has been slumbering since the fall of the Arabian prosperity.

Beyond the wide belt of sand and saliferous desert fringing the Amú on the north and south nearer to the hills, the number of inhabited spots increases considerably. The town of Shirábád with its district and Kobádián also form rather considerable oases on the north of the Amú. On the south side in Afghán territory, on the most northern spurs of the Hindu Kúsh, at variable but not usually great distances from each other, are situated the rather populous towns of Mazár-i-Sharíf, Takht-i-pul, Tásh-Kurgán, Kundúz, Balkh, Sar-i-pul, Shiber-Khan, Andkhóí, and others,—all these inhabited places are nothing but oases, surrounded by the sands of the boundless Turánian lowland which reaches almost right up to the nearest mountain spurs of the Hindu Kúsh. Usually each of these oases is situated on a stream flowing from the nearest spurs. The towns of Mazár-i-Sharíf and Takht-i-pul form exceptions to this general rule, being situated on irrigation canals run from the Balkh river. The greater part of the local towns bear the names of the rivers upon which they are situated,—for instance, Kundúz on the river of the same name; Khulm (Tásh-Kurgán), Balkh, Sar-i-pul, and others are on rivers having the same names. Except the Kundúz river, not one of these reaches the Amú; none of them are particularly rich in water. The necessity for the artificial irrigation of the local fields is so great that all the water of the streams is consumed on them. The greater part of the water is lost by evaporation (except, of course, a certain amount of water absorbed by vegetation and drunk by animals). The loss of water owing to absorption in the ground must be considered insignificant, as the soil of the localities fit for agriculture consists of the so-called "loss" which, as is well known, takes in very little water by absorption.

Thus the cultivable soil here is the same as in other parts of the vast Turkistán province, both in Russian territory and in the Khanates of Bukhára and Khíva. The ease with which systems of irrigation are here carried out proves the qualities of the soil. The banks of the canals, owing to their considerable thickness (in the cases where the canals, rise above the level of the land, which is the usual case with the smaller irrigation branches of the canals), conduct the water excellently owing to the small amount of absorption of the soil.

The water of the Amú-Darya, and equally so of the small hill rivers, contains in summer an enormous amount of mineral particles suspended in it, owing to which it appears very thick and sometimes looks like a solution of mud. This wealth of mineral particles in the water is the cause of the fertility of the fields irrigated by the water from these rivers. But there is no doubt that the waters of the rivers here also contain an admixture of organic matter almost more important than the mineral particles. Unfortunately I was unable to fix, by chemical analysis, the amount of organic matter in the local streams and canals. Consequently if I say that the water must contain a considerable admixture of organic matter, it is only because I saw everywhere that the canals were fouled

with the rubbish and sweepings of the houses which the people throw into the canals without restraint. Besides this, along both the large and small canals rice-fields exist which tend in their turn to dirty the water not a little. Finally, the supposition that the local water is fouled by a large quantity of organic matter is supported by the great exhalation here of febrile miasma, and the opinion that the formation of fever miasma is brought about under the conditions of the decomposition of organic matter in water, at a certain temperature, is recognised as almost a primary truth. In the localities visited by us all three conditions, quoted by me, for the formation of febrile miasma exist.

I ought now, as far as my own personal observations will permit me, to touch on the climate of this locality, the inhabitants of the country, the life of the population, &c., but the statement of this part of my work would be here premature. In setting forth these matters I should have to refer to my second journey into Afghánistán, undertaken by me in the end of 1878, and to quote figures and observations from my diary for January and February for 1879. I therefore postpone these matters to the second volume of my "Travels." I will now endeavour to give a short history of the valley of the Amú, referring chiefly only to the locality described by me. I think that the reader will not find fault with me for this, all the more so that in my statements I shall not have recourse to any one compilation of historical works, but chiefly to original sources.

The history of every country, of every kingdom, usually commences, or, more accurately, is preceded by various fables, sayings, legends, and traditions. The locality under consideration, the classic Bactriana, forms no exception to this general rule. On the contrary, there are few countries on the face of the globe which could compete with it on this point. If it is distinguished from other countries, it is only because here the subject of the traditions is more general and obscure than elsewhere. Here the whole of mankind serves as the subject of the traditions, and, moreover, at the primary (infant) period of his life. The predominance of this characteristic in the local traditions and fables is so strong that even private traditions about separate localities are invariably bound up in the general history of mankind. I will even go further and say that the general traditions have been oftener preserved here than the private ones, to the extinction, as it were, of these latter. This is why we often here get a negative answer to a question about the traditions belonging to local towns, ruins, &c. Nevertheless at the same time they will make statements as to the residence here, *i.e.*, in the upper half of the valley of the Amú generally, of Adam, Noah, and the other patriarchs of the Old Testament.

According to these sayings the chief town of the country, Balkh, was built by Adam, after he was driven out of Paradise.* A variation of this legend is that the town was built by Kayúmárs, the first Persian king of the Peshdádian dynasty.† It is known, however, that Musul-

* Wilford says on this subject: "The Musulmans inhabiting the country lying near Bámián affirm that Balkh was so called because Adam and Eve, after they were driven out of Paradise and had rambled about separated from one another for some time, accidentally met at this spot and welcomed each other with embraces, in consequence of which the place was called "Bahla," or in its changed form "Bahluca," which means the place of meeting.—Asiatic Researches, Vol. VI, p. 492.

† Merkhond—Rausat us Sefa—Shea's Translation, Vol. I, p. 58.

man writers confuse Kayúmárs with Adam, so that according to them he was not only the first Persian King, but the first man.* But the same Musulman authorities say that Kayúmárs had a brother and that the founding of Balkh is due to this circumstance. Thus, the name of the town is due to an exclamation of Kayúmárs, evoked from him on meeting his brother "Bal-akh" (this is really "This is my brother"†).

Other traditions attribute the founding of Balkh to the later Persian sovereigns; some to Takhuras, some to Lohurasp. The latter owing to this has even received from historians the name of "Balkhi."‡

With this town they also associate traditions about the campaign of the Assyrian King Nínos in Upper Asia. According to these statements Balkh (Bactra) was taken by Nínos, thanks only to the energy and intelligence of Semiramis, who at this time was still only the wife of one of the commanders of the Assyrian army.§ But even before this period Abraham lived here and migrated from here, the ancient Bactriana, to the land of Canaan. This tradition I myself heard from the mouths of the Afgháns.‖

The same statements say that the Amú is one of the rivers flowing out of Paradise ¶

All local traditions agree that here in Balkh the religious observance of fire worship was founded; for here Zoroaster most successfully propagated his teaching. Gushtasp (the Darius Histaspes of the Greeks) not only himself received his teaching, but used all his efforts to spread the worship of fire everywhere. Albiruni says that the son of Gushtasp Isfandiar made all embrace the new religion, and leaving no efforts untried succeeded in raising fire worshippers' temples throughout the whole of Central Asia, from the frontiers of China up to the country of Rum (Byzantium).** The town of Balkh is mentioned in the Zend Avesta as one of the first places built by Ormúzd.†† From this period, however, traditions give place to history.

Pretty accurate, though one cannot say detailed, information ascribes the existence of this country to a very remote epoch. Even in the edicts of Darius Histaspes the countries situated on both sides of the Oxus are spoken about.‡‡ Herodotus, in enumerating the satrapships into which the Persian monarchy was divided during the reign of Darius Histaspes, says, moreover, that Bactrians lived in 12 satrapships; in 15 lived Sáki and Káspi; and in 16 Parthians, Khwarizmi, Sogdiani, and Arians.§§ All these nations lived on both sides of the Oxus. At this and the following periods Balkh, although it was not yet the capital

* Wilford—*loc cit.*, p. 465.

† Merkhond—*loc cit.*, p. 58.

‡ Wilson—Ariana Antiqua, p. 123.

§ Diodor Silzilieski, Vol. II, p. 6.

‖ Looking over the literature on the subject, I only found mention of this tradition in Wilford, but he rather attributes this tradition to Bámián than to Balkh.

¶ Yule—Sketch of the Geography and history of the upper parts of the Amú—Translated by Fedchenko, p. 1. Clavicho also calls the Amú a river flowing out of Paradise, p. 224—Translated by Sreznevski.

** Reinaud—Mémoire sur l'Inde. Paris, 1849, p. 91.

†† Zend-Avesta—Work of Zoroaster translated by Anketil du Perron. Paris, 1771, Vol. I, page 266. "The fourth place, the fourth town, like Bihisht (Paradise) which I, Ormúzd, built was Balkh" (Bákhdi).

‡‡ Minaev—Information on the countries at the sources of the Amú-Darya, p. 55.

§§ Herodotus—Tali, Chap. 92-93.

of the Persian kings, had attained a flourishing condition. It served as the central point of meeting for the merchants of the east and west. The mighty Central Asian river, the Oxus, served as the main route for the traffic of the world.*

But it is not to this town alone of the valley of the Amú that the Musalman writers ascribe such an ancient and brilliant past. Merv was in part the rival of Balkh. According to one tradition it was built by Takhmuras;† others ascribe its founding to Alexander of Macedon.‡ We shall see below that this town, at the epoch of the propagation of the Musalman religion over Central Asia, attained to the same glory and brilliancy as Balkh.

The campaigns of Alexander of Macedon poured forth for his contemporaries a bright light of geographical knowledge on the countries lying between the Oxus and Jaxartes, and specially of Bactriana. Some portions of Central Asia are very accurately and clearly described in the histories of Alexander of Macedon. Amongst the localities most clearly described is, moreover, the place in Quintus Curtius cited by Burnes.§ Arrian describes the River Oxus very accurately.‖ The town Bactra was astronomically fixed first by Eratosthenes and then by Ptolemy.¶ But what is generally ignored by the Greek writers is the religious status of the country, and moreover indications on this head would have been of unusual value.

In the times of Alexander of Macedon, Bactriana formed a part of the Persian empire. After his death it was united to the district of Seleukides. But 67 years after the death of Alexander** Bactriana had already separated and was living an independent existence. Theodotus, named "the ruler of the 1,000 cities of Bactria," founded the independent Greco-Bactrian empire out of the countries about the Oxus which had been detached from Persia.

At different periods of its nearly two centuries of existence this new empire included in its dominions the following countries: Sogdiana on the north, and on the south nearly the whole of the present Afghánistán with Kábul and Bámián and also the western part of India. Eucratides, one of the most warlike kings of the Bactrian empire, had much to do with the extension of the limits of this kingdom. He made several victorious campaigns into India.†† He was the contemporary of Mithridates, the Parthian king, and is called by Justin "the great monarch."‡‡ Miander and Demetrius§§ also did much towards developing the kingdom. Nevertheless, towards the end of the sovereignty of

* We read the following in Strabo about the Oxus: "According to Aristobulus the Oxus is the largest river seen by him in Central Asia. Both he and Eratosthenes, according to the words of Patrocles, say that this river is navigable, and that many Indian goods are transported by it to Hircania. From here they reach Albania, and finally through Kur and the localities beyond it they reach Evksin (?).—Geography, Vol. XI, Chapter 7, para. 3; also see Wilson, Ariana Antiqua, p. 163.

† Barbier de Meynard—Dictionaire de la Perce extrait de Jacout, p. 526. Paris, 1861.

‡ Ibn Houkal—Oriental geography translated by Ouseley, page 215. London, 1880.

§ Burnes' Journey to Bukhára.

‖ Arrianou Anabasis, Vol. III, page 9.

¶ Gosselin—Géographie des Grecs analysée, tables I and IV. Paris, 1790.

** Minnev—Information about the country at the sources of the Amú-Darya, page 57.

†† Wilson—Ariana Antiqua, chapter on Eucratides.

‡‡ Justin—Book XLI, 6.

§§ Strabo—Book 11, Chapter II.

Eucratides Bactriana had already suffered from an inroad of the Parthians and Scythians, who took possession of some of the provinces* of the Bactrian empire. Commencing from this time it became more and more subject to attacks from the northern barbarians until a little more than 100 years before Christ (126 years†) this kingdom was finally broken up. About the commencement of our era Bactriana enters into the composition of the Indo-Scythian kingdom. At this time Kuenshavang conquered the Euatians, the chief authors of the destruction of the Bactrian empire,‡ took the country south of the Hindu Kúsh and also the valley of the Indus, and founded the Indo-Scythian kingdom.

In the 6th century A.D., Bactriana again suffered an invasion of predatory hordes. These were Turks, who at first founded a new Turkish kingdom on the ruins of the Bactrian monarchy. But Súán Shán, 100 years after their coming, already found this kingdom split up into a number of semi-independent states, the whole body of which, disposed along the upper and middle parts of the valley of the Amú (which in Súán Shán is called the Po-tsou) are called by Chinese historians by the general name of Tou-cho-lo (Touchára), *i.e.*, Tokharistán.

The geographical and ethnographical information given us by Súán Shán relative to this locality is so accurate and curious that I consider that it will not be out of place to give extracts from his work.

"On issuing from the Iron Gates," says Súán Shán, "you enter the kingdom of Tou-cho-lo. This country occupies an area of about 1,000 li§ from south to north and 3,000 li from east to west. On the east it is bounded by the mountains of Tsun-lin, and on the west by Persia. On the south it is bordered by great snowy mountains, and on the north reaches to the Iron Gates. The great River Po-tsou (Oxus—Amú) flows through the centre of this country westwards. A few hundred years ago the race of kings (in this country) ceased. Powerful chiefs, after a prolonged period of anarchy and intestine strife, made good their title of lord, and considering themselves protected (from the attacks of outer enemies) by the rivers and natural obstacles, divided the kingdom of Tou-cho-lo into 27 parts (states). But although their possessions have strong frontiers, as a whole they are subject to the Tou-kioue (Turks). As the temperature is always very high here, epidemics are very frequent."

"In the end of winter and the beginning of spring there are constant rains here, and this is why epidemics are very prevalent in the southern part of this country to the north of Lan-po. In consequence of this all pious inhabitants go to other residences on the 16th day of the 12th month, and leave them only on the 15th day of the 3rd month. This custom is caused by the abundance of rain. The religious injunctions given to them are dependent on the conditions of the time of year. The inhabitants are of a drowsy character and cowardly; their figure is common and coarse. They have no knowledge of the true faith. With regard to their language, it is little different from the other neighbouring languages. The letters consist of 25 signs, which joined together are sufficient for indicating all subjects. Books are written the wrong way,

* *Viz.*: Aspion and Turina.
† Yule, page 2.
‡ Strabo—Book XI, Chapters 8 and 2.
§ Li=⅓ mile.

and are read from left to right. The greater part of the inhabitants dress themselves in clothes of cotton cloth; woollen stuffs are little worn. In their trading intercourse they use gold and silver money, &c., which are different in shape to the coins of other kingdoms."*

At this period Buddhism was widely spread over the valley of the Oxus. Balkh, the ancient Bactra, or Po-ho-lo as Súán Shán calls it, served as the chief nursery for this social-religious sect for the whole valley. Contemporary with its religious pre-eminence, this town appears to have formed the chief link in the series of the separate principalities of Tokharistán in political respects also.

This is what we read about it in the same author :—

"The kingdom of Po-ho-lo (Ba-ha-ra, Bactra, Balkh) occupies an area of about 800 li from west to east and 400 li from north to south. The River Po-tsou (Oxus) forms the northern boundary of the principality. The circumference of the capital is nearly 20 li (6⅔ miles). All call it the "small royal town." Although the town is well fortified it is little inhabited. The productions of the soil are very varied, and it would be difficult to enumerate all the forms of flowers growing here in the water and on land.

"There are 100 monasteries here, in which there are about 3,000 pious men who follow 'Petit Vehicule' in their tenets."†

At this same time Christianity was also firmly established on this soil of ancient Parseeism. About 334 A.D. an episcopate was established at Merv. In the middle of the sixth century A.D. it was successfully spread amongst the Khevtalites (White Huns) who had conquered these localities.‡

The existence of three religions here at the same time side by side with one another gives cause for supposing on the one hand that both the local indigenous inhabitants of Iranian extraction, as well as the later arrivals, the Turkish tribes, were distinguished for their broad religious views, and on the other hand that the teaching of Zoroaster had at that time lost to a considerable extent its influence and power in the eyes of the local population. This, moreover, makes the natural sequence of those political changes perfectly comprehensible which the country had experienced in the course of several centuries up to this period. Soon after the consolidation of the power of the Turks in Bactriana and Sogdiana, Greeks again visited Central Asia, almost for the first time since the campaigns of Alexander of Macedon. Now, however, these were not the threatening phalanxes of the conqueror of the world, desolating everything on his way with fire and the sword; no—these were peaceful ambassadors of the Emperor Justin. They had for their object to establish trading relations with the Turkish Prince Dizabul and the Governor of Sogdiana, Mainakh. This event occurred in 570 A.D.§

Little time was, however, given for Christianity to spread amongst the nations of Bactriana. By the end of the seventh century the Arabs had already come here and commenced to establish the religion of

* Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales par Hiouen Thsang (Huan Shan), Vol. I, pp. 23-24.

† Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 29.

‡ Yule, p. 3.

§ Yule, p. 8.

Muhammad by fire and the sword. The teachings of Christ were rooted out with the fervour and energy worthy of a better cause But notwithstanding the cruelty with which the sword, wielded by Musalman fanaticism, raged, Christianity still maintained itself for some time after the Arab invasion both in Khurásán and in Trans-Oxania. Ibn Haukal, the Arab traveller and geographer, in the first half of the tenth century of our era, says that in Herat in his time there was a separate village occupied by Christians and in it a Christian church.*

In 666 A.D (the forty-sixth year of the Hijra) the Arab leader, Rabi-ibn-ul-Kharít, having conquered Khurásán, had already reached Balkh. Merv was soon occupied (670 A.D). It served during the course of a certain period as a stubborn point of resistance for the Khurásán representatives of the Khalífs in their wars with Bukhára. In 705 A.D. Balkh, the ancient capital of Bactriana, was also occupied by the Arabs.

It submitted to its lot without resistance. On this occasion it got rid of its formidable conquerors rather cheaply, by merely paying a war contribution.†

But a little later it was destroyed by the Arab leader Akhner-bin-Kais.‡

On this occasion the "Mother of cities"§ did not long lie in ruins. Nasr-bin-Sayár again renewed it in 742. This energetic Viceroy of Khurásán not only finally conquered the whole valley of the Amú, but also Fergána and the distant Eastern Turkistán even came under the sway of the Khalíf.

From this period commences the brilliant phase of the history of the countries situated on either side of the Oxus. The Arabs did not come here only as destroyers and conquerors; they also appeared in the light of builders and establishers of a new culture. During the brilliant period of the rule of the Samanides in Khurásán (this dynasty ended in 999 A.D.), the country became covered with flourishing populous cities. The Arab writers and travellers of that period speak in especial terms of praise of the following cities, situated in the valley of the Amú: Merv, Talkán, and Balkh to the south of the river; and Termez, Kobádián, and Chagánián to the north. Two towns, Balkh and Merv, vied with each other more than all others in civilising activity. The latter in the middle of the tenth century already reckoned amongst the number of its citizens many celebrated persons, some of whom were still living at the time, and some of whom were dead. "From Merv shone forth the light of the Abbasides," so the well-known Arab traveller Ibn Haukal tells us, "and Mamún lived in this city." When he took possession of the Khalífat, Merv brought to light many brave leaders and celebrated men of learning. The doctor Varzuï, who excelled in skill all the remainder of his contemporaries, and Barbed, the musician, who composed such charming songs, were born in this town."‖

At this period Balkh had already received the name of the "Cupola of Science," or Kubbat-ul-ilm.

* Oriental Geography, p. 218.
† Vambéry—Trans-Oxania, Vol I, p. 26. Russian translation, 1873.
‡ Barbier de Meynard—Dictionnaire de Perce, p. 121.
§ As above.
‖ Oriental Geography, p. 216.

It will be understood that the ancient Bactriana, the late Tokharistán, and at the time under consideration forming part of Khurásán, had not during all this period enjoyed uninterrupted peace. Prolonged peace in Central Asia is a thing not to be thought of, and all the more so was this the case in those remote times. Consequently the country played a part of no little importance in the religious troubles of the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as in the internal dissensions of the Khurásán rulers. At the end of the rule of the Samanide dynasty the country was again subject to the influx of uninvited guests—predatory hordes from the north. On this occasion these "guests" were the Seljuk Turks. In the commencement of the eleventh century Merv and Balkh formed the main stages on the path of their victorious progress westwards. Notwithstanding the plundering and devastation to which the country was subject by this inroad, yet the tree of civilisation had taken such deep root that the prosperity of the country continued to progress, and progress with giant strides. At this period the valley of the Amú succeeded in producing on its soil a whole Pleiades of learned men and poets, who even in the present day would have done honour to their beloved country. It is sufficient to say that here grew up and worked such "colossi" of knowledge and learning as the celebrated doctor Avisene ("Ibn Sinah"), justly called "the father of Arabian medical science," and Al-Biruni. In order to give an idea of the scope of Avisene's activity, I may state that Musulman historians calculate that there are more than 100 compilations* or works which this light of Arabian science wrote and issued. Of the quality of his works one may judge by the fact that many of the chemical preparations invented by him are still mentioned in the present works on pharmacy. Possessing unusual erudition for his time, he at the same time possessed mental qualities which are often wanting in the medical luminaries of the present day. Here is an instance. When Mahmúd, the celebrated founder of the mighty Ghazni monarchy, wished to surround his throne with the first men of science and art of his time, he made a very flattering offer to Avisene, but the latter refused his proposal, because "an independent position was worth more than everything else."† Abdul Rikhán Muhammad, named Al-Biruni, and better known by this name, was another pillar of science of that time. He wrote a mass of works on astronomy, mathematics, geography, languages, &c. He was a kind of universal genius. Not to mention that he was thorough master of the Persian and Arabic languages, he read authors in the original Latin and Greek, and he also learnt Sanscrit. The information he gives us about India is unique of its kind. He made a number of astronomical calculations, and even with the present improved appliances of astronomical science his mistakes are considered quite insignificant.

Amongst the poets forming the pride of the former glorious Khurásán, it is enough to mention the contemporary of Al-Biruni and Avisene—Anseri, the author of "Vamiq-el-Azra," "The Red Idol," "The White Idol," &c.

In the twelfth century the valley of the Amú reached the apogee of its prosperity. The Arab geographers, historians, and travellers cannot

* Haeser—Lehrbuch der Geshichte der Medicin, 1875, Vol. 1, p. 558.
† Reinaud—Mémoire sur l'Inde, p. 28.

be sufficiently astonished at the wonders of the prosperity of Balkh, Merv, and Termez. Merv was the capital of the powerful Seljúks. Sultán Sanjár especially strove for the development and prosperity of his capital,* but during the reign of this prince Merv suffered a terrible misfortune. The Gúzí (Goths), coming from the north like the other barbarians, streamed forth over the flourishing valley of the Oxus, and Merv was some years hidden beneath ruins; but it soon recovered from that devastation.

The following is what we read about Balkh in the contemporary Arab geographer Edrisi:—

"Balkh, situated in a plain 12 miles from the hills, is the capital of the country of the Turks; it is the chief quarter for their troops, and the place of residence of the government and courts of justice. There are here fine bazars, where an extensive trade is carried on, and where you can find all articles of luxury and all staples of trade. The town has seven gates; its suburbs are flourishing and populous, and the people are employed in industries and trade. The great musjid is built in the centre of the town and is surrounded by bazars. The town is situated on the banks of a stream; this stream flows near the gates of Niú-Bekhár,† and irrigates the environs of the town where vineyards and fruit gardens are everywhere seen, and where there are colleges for students, and all other kinds of establishment of this kind for teaching the sciences. Great wealth is collected in this town, and there are many eminent men and rich merchants; everywhere generally great abundance and prosperity are seen."‡

Yákúb reckons that there were in Balkh 1,200 musjids and as many baths.§ The pitch of development to which social life in these parts of Central Asia had attained may be judged from the following facts. At the same period at which medical art had reached the degree of sorcery, when hospitals were not even thought of in Europe (except in the Byzantine empire), there were in Merv in the ninth century model hospitals.|| In this town Yákúb counted ten libraries, one of which, according to him, contained only 200 volumes; but then the books to be found in it were of priceless value.¶

"I passed nearly the whole time while I lived here," writes Yákúb, "in the various libraries of this town, forgetting both my country and my family in the delights of acquiring science; it was here that I collected nearly all the materials which afterwards served me for compiling both this book and also my other compositions."**

After the overthrow of the Sultan Sanjár, Kurkhání, the leader of the wild hordes of the Gúzí (Goths),—an overthrow which put an end to the power of the Seljúks in Khurásán,—the part of the country under discussion, *i.e.*, the valley of the upper central course of the Amú, passed in turn from one hand to another; at first the princes of Gaur possessed it, who had just established their sovereignty in Afghán-

* Barbier de Meynard, p. 526.
† A corrupted Sanscrit word "Nává Wichárá," the new monastery.
‡ Géographie d'Edrisi translated by A. Joubert, Paris, 1863, pp. 473—4.
§ Barbier de Meynard, p. 142.
|| Haeser—Zehrbuch der Geschichte der Medicin, Vol. I, p. 564.
¶ Barbier de Meynard, p. 528.
** Ditto, p. 529.

istán on the ruins of the Ghaznivide monarchy; it thus became subject to the vast but ephemeral monarchy of the Khwárizm rulers, suddenly formed from nothing.

But from this period the ancient Bactriana passed into a new phase of its existence. In the commencement of the thirteenth century a horde of wild Mongols spread over nearly the whole of Asia, led by the "Prince of the World," Chengiz Khán. It was like a stream of fire exterminating everything in its path; it was like some senseless spreading element, wiping everything living from the face of the earth—whether man, beast, or vegetation! Khurásán, and consequently also the ancient Bactriana, did not escape their sad lot. Flourishing cities after this inroad became mere ruins. Nothing saved them from destruction, neither steady defence nor submission, and meeting the conquerors with enormous ransoms. Thus perished Balkh; thus perished Merv and a number of other towns. "The inhabitants and priesthood of Balkh," so Addul Gházi Bahádur Khán* informs us, "went to Chengiz Khán, beseeching him to spare their town, but he refused their prayer because he said Sultán Jelál-ud-dín being still alive, the inhabitants of Balkh could always rise again from the dead." All the inhabitants were slain and the town and fortress destroyed. The same story was repeated with Merv. The enormous population of this town, amounting to 1,300,000 souls, were, after its surrender to the Mongol leader, Tuli Khán, given over as prisoners of war to the Mongol soldiers; each soldier received 400 prisoners.† All the prisoners were killed; only 400 artisans and artists were spared and sent to far-distant Mongolia to beautify the capital of the "Scourge of the World," Chengiz Khán. After such a radical devastation the part of Khurásán under review could never again raise itself to its former prosperity.

Fifty years afterwards the celebrated Venetian Marco Polo passed through these localities. "In ancient times," he says, "the town of Balkh was much more extensive, but now it has suffered severely from the inroads of the Tartars, who have destroyed a great part of its buildings; formerly there were many marble palaces and gardens, the ruins of which are visible to the present time."‡ To what a degree the country was devastated by the Mongol invasion is seen from the fact that Ibn Batouta, who travelled through Central Asia a whole century after the campaigns of Chengiz, says that the country was full of ruins. Balkh had not been rebuilt since the period of the invasion, and presented a heap of ruins. Ibn Batouta especially laments over one temple which had been destroyed, and which according to him was one of the greatest edifices in the world.§ The end of the fifteenth century was scarcely a better time for the valley of the Amú than the preceding ones. Timúr the lame now ruled over all Asia. It is true that by devastating whole countries and destroying a dozen cities he embellished Samarkand at their expense. The ancient Sogdiana flourished under him, but the ancient Bactriana gained nothing by it. In 1369 Balkh was again destroyed, just the same as 1½ centuries before, by the hand of a mighty Mongol, Timúr. The cause of the

* Abdul Gházi Bahádur Khán—Histoire des Mogols et des Tartares, Vol. 2, p. 121.

† Barbier de Meynard, p. 528.

‡ Marco Polo—Travels in Tartary and other countries in 1286, p. 41. Edition 1873, Petersburg.

§ Voyages de Ibn Batouta traduits par Défrémery, Vol. III, p. 59.

destruction of the town, which had scarcely begun to recover from its former annihilation, was the contest between Timúr and the Amír of Herat, Hussein. But immediately after this Balkh became the witness of a prominent historical event which occurred within its old walls. On the 8th April 1369, at the "Kuriltai," *i.e.*, the upper assembly of the Mongol elders and leaders, Timúr Beg, better known to us as Tamerlane, was elected Amír of Maur-un-nahr (Trans-Oxania), which was accompanied by the traditional Mongol custom of raising up the elected one of the nation on a white felt.

After this, peace reigned for a pretty long period in the desert localities situated on the Oxus.

During the government of Khurásán by the Herat Amírs, the locality under review in some degree recovered from the misfortunes which had befallen it. Amír Hussein Baikár especially contributed towards raising up its prosperity. At this period a settlement, unknown up till now, and which at the present day furnishes the administrative centre of Afghán Turkistán, entered the arena of the political life of the country,—I allude to the town of Mazár-i-Sharíf. This sudden elevation of an insignificant village was caused by the discovery in it of the sepulchre of the celebrated Musalman saint and hero Ali.*

In the commencement of the fifteenth century the Spanish embassy passed through the lands of ancient Bactriana (or Bactria) accredited to the court of Timúr by Henry III of Castile. The head of this embassy, Roy Gonzales de Clavicho, has left us interesting accounts of the travels of the Mission through Asia. This is what he tells us about the ancient capital of the country, Balkh: "The next day, Monday, the 10th August 1404, we reached a town surrounded by a very broad earthen parapet which was about 30 paces wide, but it was broken through in several places. The town was divided into three parts by parapets which ran lengthwise and intersected it from one end to the other. The first division, which was between the first and second parapets, was empty, and no one lived in it; much cotton was sown in it. People live in the second division, but the population is not very thick; in the third division there are a great number of inhabitants, and although the greater part of the towns we visited were unwalled, this one had good walls."†

This is all that an observant traveller can tell us about what was once the most important town in Central Asia.

In the commencement of the sixteenth century Shaibáni, the founder of a new dynasty, having seated himself on the "Kok-tásh,"‡ again filled Central Asia with the clash of war. The Uzbak hordes, led by him, poured into the valley of the Zarafshán and penetrated further south into the valley of the Amú. The towns of Khurásán, one after the other, fell under the blows of the unbridled and unrestrained hand of the savage and bloodthirsty Uzbak. These new conquerors were no less barbarians and murderers than the hordes of Chengiz Khán. "They compelled the defenceless poor people by tortures and cruelties to give up their concealed treasures, and carried off into slavery all whom they could take with them." All Central Asia groaned aloud! Vainly did the last scion of the noble,

* *Vide* the preceding chapter of this work.

† Travels of Clavicho, p. 223.

‡ Kok-tásh or "green stone" which represented the throne of the Bukháran Amírs; is at present to be found at Samarkand.

enlightened Timúrides, Báber Mirza, strive to avert the tempestuous torrent of these new Vandals, who again suddenly appeared from the north; brute force prevailed, and the "Julius Cæsar of Central Asia" was obliged to retire and fly to Kábul.

Notwithstanding that Abdulla Khán of the Shaibáni dynasty (born 1538, died 1597) also carried on war all his life, he nevertheless had time to heal the wounds inflicted by him on the countries under his authority. With the name of this ruler are connected in the mouths of the Central Asians all the latest, more or less remarkable constructions to be found in the countries contiguous to the Amú-Darya. "Who made such and such a large irrigation canal?" you will ask the natives, and receive for answer "Abdulla Khán." "Who built these caravansarais and sardábas" (wells supplied by rain water) "in the sandy desert?" "Abdulla Khán." Nevertheless the Cis-Amú valley became weaker and weaker, the towns became extinct, and the villages empty. The grand Moguls of India, a part of whose empire was at one time comprised in ancient Bactriana, did not aid this depopulation.

In the middle of the seventeenth century it appears that Central Asia first saw representations of the Russian empire within the walls of its towns. In 1675 a Russian embassy was sent to Bukhára.* It consisted of the following persons: Vaselie Alexandrov Dandov, Nikifor Venyukov, Ivan Shapkin, and an Astrakhán Muhammadan, Muhammad Isúp (Yúsuf?) Kasimov.

Dandov and Venyukov had Bukhára alone for the especial object of their journey; but Shapkin and Kasimov had to go much further to the Sháh of India. They went to Khilif, passed some time in Balkh, and then went to Kábul by Charikar and "Kurbent" (Ghorband?). During their residence in Balkh they succeeded in gaining the good will of the Khán of Balkh, who at that time was almost entirely independent of the empire of the Mongols. The Khán of Balkh was so impelled towards friendship with Russia, that he even sent his ambassador with Kasimov to Moscow.

But even earlier than Kasimov and Shapkin, *viz.*, from 1644—1650, Nikita Medvaiev lived at Balkh; he had been interpreter to Boris Pasukhin during the time the latter was at Bukhára in the quality of Russian Ambassador. This is what Medvaiev says of the results of his journey to Balkh: "The Czar of Balkh, Supkhán‡ Kuli Khán, wishes for the despatch of ambassadors, the counsel, and friendship of the great monarch, Czar, and mighty prince, Alexis Michaelovitch, the autocrat of Great, Little, and White Russia." And Subhán Kuli Khán says: "If the great monarch desires to send his people and ambassadors to Balkh, India, or other kingdoms, he, Subhán Kuli Khán, will permit them to pass through his territory and guard them in it. And the Indian road from Balkh is not bad, and there is no plundering or taxation."§

This it appears was the first intercourse between the Moscow Czar and the distant countries of the present Afghánistán. The fact is remarkable that the Russia of the so-called "Moscow period" was not, apparently, so entirely "the closed borough" which it is now represented to be.

* Russia's first intercourse with Bukhára commenced, however, many years before this period.

† Minaev—Information on the countries the sources of the Amú, p. 217.

‡ Probably "Subhán."—*Translator.*

§ Minaev, p. 228.

The trade of Russia, it is true, was not so extensive as at the present time, but at the same time it was not so risky as now; its interests were then sought for and guarded by Government not one whit less than now.

The storm, fortunately the last one, which broke suddenly and again convulsed nearly all Asia, contributed to the ever-increasing depopulation of the classical Bactriana. This storm was produced by the Persian robber, Nádir Sháh. On the ruins of his ephemeral monarchy afterwards sprung up the Afghán kingdom under the chiefship of the Saddozai Duránis. Balkh and other towns on that side of the Amú were comprised in that kingdom. In the commencement of the present century, however, when the Afghán empire was divided into parts, the valley of the Amú in its political condition called to mind the Tokharistán of Súán Shán. Here a number of separate semi-independent Khanates were found. The Khanate of Khulm, during the government of Kilich Ali Khán, attained to greater political influence at that time in the valley of the Amú than any other state.

Mír Abdul Karím testifies* that the country during the rule of the above-mentioned Khán attained to a certain degree of prosperity. But in 1823 the Kundúz robber, Murád Beg, took possession of the Khanate of Khulm and sent all the population to Kundúz, where they died, almost to the last man, from fever. Of Khulm, as of Balkh, the ruins alone remained.

A quarter of century before this, the "Queen of the World," Merv, shared the same fate as Khulm. One of the most orthodox monarchs of Bukhára, Sháh Murád Beg, wishing to put an end finally to Merv, destroyed the dam which furnished the supply of water to the town. After this Merv was obliged to surrender to the troops of the Amír of Bukhára. Part of the population of Merv was transferred to the Khanate of Bukhára and the remainder to Herat.†

As is well known, Merv at the present time forms the point of concentration of the Teke Turkumáns.

In 1824-25 the celebrated English traveller Moorcroft visited the valley of the Oxus. All the members of this expedition left their bones in this desert valley, filled with ruins.‡ In the year 1832, the daring Burnes went on the track of this celebrated traveller into the valley of the Amú. In 1838-39 Wood and Dr. Lord visited the upper part of the valley of the Amú, but did not go below Tásh-Kúrgán. In 1840 the English officers Burslem and Sturt, and in the same year Stoddart and Conolly, passed through this valley and went to Bukhára. In 1845 Ferrier travelled through nearly the whole of the Khurásán of the Khalífs. He made a round from Herat by Maimena, Balkh, Tásh-Kúrgán, Khuram, and by the entirely unknown countries (first visited by him since Sultán Baber) of the Central Hazarájat and returned to Herat. From that time up to the journey of the Russian Mission not a single European had been in the lands of ancient Bactriana, more lately Tokharistán and, at the present time Afghán Turkistán.

* Mír Abdul Karím—Histoire de l'Asíe Centrale, p. 245.

† Mír Abdul Karím, p. 140.

‡ The following is what we read about Moorcroft's death in Burnes: "With this I send (letter of Dr. Lord to Burnes) a scrap of paper found by me amongst some accounts on which are written by the hand of Trebeck, under date 6th September 1825, these words: 'G. M. arrived at Balkh 25th August 1825, died 27th August.'

CHAPTER VI.

From Tásh-Kúrgán to Bamián.

Road along the River Khúlm-Sayád—Night journey—Bádisiáb—The Haibak basin—The defile of Dara-i-Zindan—Burnes' hyperbole—Sarbágh—Khúram—First pass on the road to Bámián, the Chambárak—The Valley of Rúi—Sources of the River Khúlm and the Do-áb depression—Second hyperbole given by Burnes—The passes of Kizil and Kára-Kotal—The Valley of Mádair—Two pages from the contemporary history of Afghánistán—Defile of Hajgákh—The Governor of Bámián—The Káhmárd Valley—Inaccuracy of Burslem—The Dandán-Shikan ascent—The Saigan Valley—Asafœtida—The defile of Súkhta-chinár—The point of Rígi-nau—The Ak Rabát Pass—View from it over the panorama of the surrounding hills—Descent from the pass to the Bámián Valley.

On the 9th (21st) July we left Tásh-Kúrgán in the direction of Kábul. Slowly did our baggage train collect, and still more slowly did it issue from the gates of the garden and file off across the open space due south, towards where a dark cleft gaped in the mountain ramparts of the Paropamisus: this was the Khúlm defile. Again we are all in the saddle, both sick and healthy; the former, if they did not look altogether hardy, were not dejected. Nazirov, however, was in a bad way; weakened terribly by an attack of fever the evening before, he had not actually the strength to control his fiery horse. Mossin Khán, seeing him in difficulties, lent him his own excellent roadster, and himself took the other. I acknowledge that this conduct produced an indefinable impression upon me: last night terrible cruelty, the victim of which was a soldier half-beaten to death; to-day civility, although not shown to a wild Afghán.

Our cavalcade filed along the Khúlm stream. On the left and opposite side lay the citadel of the town, with its very lofty castle. The road crosses the river twice. At the points of passage excellent stone bridges are built with granite abutments. These bridges would have done honour to a country which was not so wild and poor as the Chahár-Vilayat. Their width was sufficient for the passage of the broadest *araba* (native cart), and their durability sufficient to bear a considerable weight. I must remark that the swiftness of the river current at this point is very considerable. We move on further and further, past verdant gardens, picturesquely shading the rocks overhanging the river, past houses scattered here and there, and tombs. Two or three musjids, or chapels of saints, I do not know which, are left behind us; the heaps of sheeps' horns placed here bear witness to the tombs of local Musalman saints.

But here commence the first short slopes of the range of hills rising steeply in front of us. This range is about 1,000 feet high above the level of the stream. Its highest points on the right and left, especially on the left, raise their cones to a considerable height above the surrounding locality. The centre of the range, however, gradually sinks down, and, where the Khúlm stream crosses it, forms a grand defile, with walls several hundred feet high. I was plunged into contemplation at the grand beauty of this gorge, which I now saw for the first time, but I was

soon roused from this condition by the unpleasant news brought me by a Cossack of the escort, who came up at full gallop, that the medicine load had fallen. The medicine load! It was not merely a common load that had fallen. If the load with the stores, wines, or anything else, had fallen and broken, the misfortune would not have been so great; but the medicine load in these parts, it was more precious than anything else. If there was no quinine, the fevers might act on our small detachment as effectually as it did on Moorcroft's expedition. If there was no store of biscuits, it was of no consequence; the native bread could be obtained anywhere. But woe to us if we were deprived of our stock of opium!

Of course, on receiving this unpleasant news, I flew like an arrow to the baggage, and there actually saw the medicine boxes lying on the ground, and, alongside of them, an exhausted horse, apparently quite contented that he had succeeded in getting rid of his load. I threw myself on the boxes, opened them, and was able to draw my breath freely, for apparently none of the things were broken.

As this was not the first fall the medicine load had had, and I feared that it would occur again, when probably matters would not turn out so fortunately as up to the present time, I went to the General and drew attention to the danger of such an occurrence, pointing out that some fine day we would be left without a grain of quinine and without a drop of acid. My representations were accepted as they should have been, and the caravan-bashi was given the strictest order in future to tell off the strongest and best-conditioned horse for the medicine chest.

But here we are at the walls of the defile. This is not merely a common defile; it is rather enormous gates, stone door-posts, polished smooth by time and the river, and several hundred feet high. The walls were of a greenish-grey colour and gloomy. They produce upon one a certain oppressive feeling by their grandeur. Above, at an inaccessible height, is seen a narrow streak of bright blue sky; below, at our feet, murmurs the stream, breaking through this rocky dam, and in front of us is gloom and the indistinct outlines of the pass.

The breadth of the defile does not exceed 40 paces, and in places it is narrower. The breadth of the actual road, which runs along the right wall of the defile, and on the left is bounded by the roaring stream, does not exceed 5 to 8 paces.

When we entered the defile, the sounds of the trumpet resounded through the sombre rocky mass, and the beat of the drum filled it with thunder-like echoes. The length of the pass is less than half a verst. It then commences gradually to widen out and passes into a narrow mountain valley, following the stream throughout, and fringed on both sides with high and very steep parallel ranges of hills. In places the hills presented sharp edges, and here one could see that they consisted of argillaceous shale; in some places the exposed bluffs appeared simply to consist of hardened earth. In the places where the slopes of the hills were not so steep, they were clothed with scanty, brown grass, burnt up by the sun, and with moss; lichens grew on the cornices of the rocks. The banks of the river soon proved fit for cultivation. Here and there appeared beds of cotton, the bursting pods of which already showed their yellow and rosy tints. Still further on there appeared also small patches of wheat-fields, but the wheat was already cut; the stubble alone remained in the fields.

In the meantime the road now ran along the very bank of the river, and now clung to the precipitous rocks of the neighbouring stony range, rising slightly into the hills, descending again and winding about. Its surface was excellent; you could not wish for a better *chaussée*. In places this natural *chaussée* was covered, however, with a quantity of fine and sharp stones, which were not good for the horses.

About 10 miles from Tásh-Kúrgán we passed a small village with piles of sheaves of wheat and clover (lucerne) on the flat roofs of the unsightly native houses. The village seemed quite uninhabited. On the road, however, we sometimes met a few passers-by, amongst whom were some women, shrouded from head to foot in their "chadar-saván."

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The road continues on winding capriciously, following the line of the river. The sharp ridges of hills steadily accompany it. But here is, as it were, the end of the defile. It is completely closed by a transverse wall of hills! Where is the road? Where is one to go to? You reach the end before you, and unexpectedly see that on the left an opening extends, bending round at almost a right angle to the former direction of the route. One has to turn round a sharp ridge which juts out from the rocky mass, and behind this ridge a picturesque panorama opens out to your view. The defile opens out into an almost circular basin with a diameter of nearly one verst (⅔ mile). The stream divides this basin into two almost equal halves.

The larger half on the right has just had the corn cut from it; the smaller half on the left is occupied by a rather extensive village, snugly and picturesquely situated on the slopes of the hilly amphitheatre. This village is called Sayád, and lies 15 versts (0 miles) from Tásh-Kúrgán.

We cross by a wooden bridge to the left bank of the river, and tents already await us, prepared beforehand and pitched on the very brink of the stream.

The Afghán commander accompanying us makes us his usual morning visit, asks us if we are comfortably lodged, and then, saluting us, goes out to his own tents. The poor Cossacks! Five of them suffered severely from fever; one of them even showed all the signs of the dangerous apoplectic form; with all of them the spleen was much enlarged and painful from the pressure.

On the following day we rose early in the morning, at 3 A.M. It was still quite dark and one wished much to sleep on, but we had to mount. The Cossacks formed line and "We wish you good health, Excellency," resounded in the night air in reply to the salutation of the commander. We again had to cross the bridge to pass through a narrow defile and then a rather broad valley, apparently cultivated (in the darkness one could not see properly); on the right were hills, on the left also hills; the road was now soft, now stony; we several times had to cross irrigation channels; then a gradual ascent, and after it a long and steep descent. This is all one can say about this day's march. In the darkness one had actually to grope one's way along. Even the bright southern stars assisted us but little. The moon had set on this night at 2 A.M., so we could not utilise its enlightening rays, and owing to the darkness we rode very slowly. About 6 A.M., when it was already pretty light, on descending a hill we saw, about 5 versts off on the left of the road, the apparently rather large village of Hazrat Sultán. We

left it on our left. On finishing the descent, the road ran along a large irrigation channel, which extended up to the village of Bádisiáb, where our daily halting-place was fixed. On reaching any station I always first make myself acquainted with the surroundings, and this I did here. Our halting-ground, and also the tolerable-sized village of Bádisiáb were situated in an open hollow. On the east and west this hollow was bounded by steeply rising, as it were detached, rocky hills, attaining a height of several hundred feet. On the north-east extended fields, apparently reaching up to the village of Hazrat Sultán; on the north and north-west, flat high ground, from which we had descended to the village, and on the south the hollow is quite open. I was very much pleased that before starting from Samarkand I had bought a small pocket compass, all for 30 kopeks, in joke. Now this compass, carried for convenience in my watch-pocket, did me good service. Whenever I looked at my watch, I also used the compass, and in a manner which quite eluded the vigilance of the Afgháns, who apparently watched us very eagerly, and consequently disturbed our "naturalist" (the topographer) to no small extent. Once he was regularly caught. This happened once when he was noting in his book the last turn of the road and some village. Mossin Khán, who for some reason was very fond of the "naturalist's" society, at once asked him what he had in the book. The naturalist, however, composed his face as if praying, muttered with his lips for some seconds, then kept profound silence, sighed heavily, and finally feelingly closed his book. This course of action satisfied Mossin Khán as an answer better than anything, and apparently set at rest any suspicions as to any further observations of the topographer in his black book.

The usual tent of the Indian type already awaited us at our halting-ground. It was, however, still quite early, 8 A.M.; the air was fresh and pure, and in fact it was so cool (only 68° F., which was such an unusual phenomenon for us who had experienced a heat of 86° F. on the preceding days) that we did not desire to avail ourselves of its hospitable shade.

To-day Mossin Khán for some reason thought of treating me to his cooling drink. Outside it was only 77° F. at 10 A.M., and Mossin Khán proposes his cooling "ab-i-limu!" One could say nothing; the time was most unseasonably chosen, especially if we remember that, at the time of the greatest heat, reaching 111·74° F. in the shade, this same Mossin Khán had never uttered a syllable about his cooling nectar.

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After breakfast, part of the Mission went to sleep, and the more active part, impelled by a lively curiosity, expressed the wish to do something, to go somewhere and see the neighbourhood.

There were the ruins of what looked like a windmill, sticking up before our eyes, and for some reason built on a very steep hill,—so steep and high (about 150 feet) that the carrying backwards and forwards of the grain and flour was probably a work of great labour. I doubt whether these were the ruins of a windmill. Why should they build one in such an inconvenient place, all the more so as a wide irrigation canal admitted of the construction of a watermill with little expense and every convenience? I was more inclined to put down these ruins as the remains of a tower or fortification. At all events why not con-

vince ourselves as to what they really were? The hill was very steep, but one could mount it on foot, and it was not more than 200 paces from our tents. The next thing was to ask for permission to go to the ruins on the hill. "To ask for what?" says the reader. I say again, "permission!" I will put an end to your uncertainty and say that permission was refused. "It was dangerous." This phrase had now become a stereotyped one amongst the Mission. There was then nothing left for it but to join the sleepers.

On the following day, or rather night, and a pretty dark one too, we started on our journey. Some of the sick Cossacks, worn out with the feverish attack which had seized them the whole preceding day, had only just fallen asleep, and the beneficent sleep had just commenced to have its good effect when they again had to get into the saddle and jolt along for several hours.

Nevertheless the signal trumpet makes the neighbouring hills resound with its sharp notes and awakes the night echoes; but it also awakes our little camp; then the drum beats and we move on. It was very dark—so dark that for some paces nothing could be seen. We had scarcely made a few steps forward when one of the horsemen disappeared suddenly as if he had sunk through the earth. Struggles and cries were heard. Those riding near him at once dismounted and went to the help of the fallen horseman. It turned out to be Zamán-beg. His horse in the dark had not seen a hole, made a false step, and had fallen into it. The rider, of course, fell with the horse. Fortunately they got off rather cheaply. Zamán-beg only received a slight contusion of the left foot, and the horse dislocated its right shoulder. Having changed his horse Zamán-beg again mounted.

We rode on in the darkness of the night. About this march one can only say that we rode by the hour along the side of some hill, and that a range of hills rose up to our left. Occasionally we came across solitary huts. Heaven only knows whether the field through which we rode, and which apparently extended far to our right, was cultivated or not.

We came across two or three irrigation canals, from which one might conclude that the field was cultivated. Of the direction of the march one could only judge by the position of the polar star. Afterwards the topographer told me that, in order to read the degrees on his compass, he had lighted a cigarette, and by its light read the bearings to half a degree. We again rode slowly owing to the darkness. It was only after riding for several hours that dawn broke, and the white fleecy shroud of morning mist commenced slowly to rise and disappear; immediately after the first rays of the rising sun broke over the clear-cut hill tops and penetrated the morning mist with golden streaks, and it was only then that it became possible to take note of what we were riding through. Now the locality proved to be an extensive plain, stretching from south-east to north-west; in length the eye measured it at 10 miles and its breadth was $3\frac{1}{3}$ to $4\frac{2}{3}$ miles. It was all densely cultivated. Here and there amongst the fields were seen villages literally buried in green shady gardens. One could now see, and was not left to guess as before, that the stream which we had crossed by a ford while it was yet dark was the Khúlm stream.

This extensive valley was apparently well populated and cultivated.

We soon after passed a village, the name of which remained unknown to me. Before reaching this village the direct road from Hazrat Sultán joined our route. The road was now wider and fit for the movement of wheeled traffic. A great deal of traffic apparently goes on along it, as it was well beaten with *aruba* ruts and the tracks of caravans and baggage animals. We gradually approached the south-east end of the valley. The villages situated along the River Khúlm, which flowed almost through the centre of the valley, became more important ones and the gardens thicker. Finally we reached a stone bridge, of several arches, thrown over the Khúlm River. The bridge was good and strong, arched, and made of large blocks of stone. Having crossed to the other side, we at once entered a village and rode through its gardens right up to our halting-place. At about a verst from it we had to ride through the street of the village of Haibak. This is a very large village, and on our way we had often to turn out of one street into another.

We again crossed a bridge thrown across a deep ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a brook, ascended a hill, and then again descended to the stream; went along its banks for several hundred paces and reached two enormous chinár (plane) trees. Under the shade of these giant chinárs our tents were pitched. The selection of this place for a camp did honour to the æsthetic taste of the Afgháns. The chinárs were so wide-spreading that our large Indian tent and all the others also were completely sheltered under its shade.

Halt. Again some of us lie down to sleep; again some of us keep awake.

"Doctor!" was the customary exclamation of the General, "Well, how goes it? The air is wonderful here; I think we must be at a considerable elevation (the height from English information was 4,000 feet). How are the Cossacks? I fancy they must be getting well. Look at the elevated situation of this place and at the water too; tell me, oughtn't this to have a good effect on them?"

I agreed with the General's opinion that the Cossacks must get well, that the locality was high, but added that in the Caucasus there were many elevated spots, but at the same time they were very feverish localities.

The General at once was drawn into calling to mind his service in the Caucasus. We spoke much about the "celebrated Lesgian line," where he was District Commander for some time; about Dágestán, &c. Now the Colonel begins to talk also, roused from his slumber by the mention of familiar places. The General and Colonel had many points in common with reference to the Caucasus, as both of them had long served there. Whilst this conversation and the review of the past experiences of the General and Colonel was going on, I left the tent and, impelled by curiosity, went towards a hill lying near. The topographer also went with me.

We jumped over the mud fence separating our camp from the hill, on which rose a fortification, and climbed up the hill. The Afghán sentries saw us, but did not prevent our going further. We mounted higher and higher up the steep stony slope of the hill, reached the fortification, went round it to the right, and found ourselves at the highest point of the hill. Before us lay, as if in the palm of the hand, the extensive valley of the Haibak. Far to the west the part of the valley traversed by us in the

morning was lost to view. On the north at this place it is hemmed in by hills, but beyond them again opens out to the north-east and is lost to view in the distance. To the south the hills commence with that on which we stood, and to the south-east was seen the narrow depression of the Khúlm River, quickly lost to view in the windings of the Haibak defile.

The village of Haibak consists really of several separate villages, bordering, in a crescent, the hill slope of the southern range of hills on which we stood, and on which, a few feet below us, was situated the fortification. This fortification consisted of a tower of several storeys, surrounded by high mud walls. It commanded the village and the parts of the valley adjacent to it on the east and north. In many places gigantic trees stood out in the dark mass of gardens, rising loftily above the general level of the valley vegetation. These were, in all probability, similar gigantic chinárs to those under the shade of which our tents were pitched. Scarcely had the topographer succeeded in making the necessary sketches and notes for his route, scarcely had I succeeded in taking in the general, and, to do it justice, very grand, picture of the locality, when an Afghán sentry suddenly appeared on the scene and began to say something in an excited manner and wave his arms in a downward direction, towards our camp. Out of all he said I only understood "*ne mi-shavad*" and "*Jurnal*," the former being "It cannot be," and the latter "General;" this was interpreted by us to mean that the General required us. There was nothing to be done; we had to return to camp and listen to a lecture for our unauthorized absence from it.

On the following day, the 12th (24th) July, we passed through the majestic defile (gorge) of the Darah-i-Zindán. This gorge is also called the Haibak. Burnes, who passed through it in 1832, explains its being called the Darah-i-Zindan, by saying that it is so gloomy; its walls are so high and so close together that the rays of the sun never shine into it, consequently perpetual gloom reigns in it, as in a prison (Darah-i-Zindán means the "prison pass"). I must say that the respected Burnes on this occasion allowed his fancy to pervert facts. The rocky walls of the defile are really very high, reaching in places a height of 500 feet, and being at the same time often precipitous; but it is possible for the sun's rays to penetrate the depth because the main direction of the axis is north and south. Besides this, in places the defile is half a verst wide, and is never narrower than 50 sajénes (350 feet). If I had been ignorant of the trustworthy explanation of the name of the gorge, I should rather have explained its origin as due to purely optical causes. The fact is that the gorge sometimes winds to one side, sometimes to the other, of its general axis. In a section of the gorge, between two such bends, owing to the laws of linear perspective, you see neither entrance nor exit to the gorge, and thus, seeing yourself surrounded on all sides by precipitous and often very lofty walls, you feel yourself, as it were, buried alive in an immense pit or prison. I say that I should have given this explanation of the etymology of the word if I had not known the actual interpretation of the name; it is, however, quite simple and renders any guesses on this account perfectly unnecessary. Five miles south of Haibak, at the village of Akám, the remains of caves are seen in the northern wall of the gorge. These caves formerly played, and may even now play, the rôle of prisons. There, they say, some well-known Central Asian prisoner was kept once for a long time, but I could not ascertain who he was, and on this

occasion my passion for collecting various statements and traditions was not gratified.

On this day we marched from our halting-ground at 7 A.M. On this occasion we gave each their due—sleep for the night and movement for the day. Owing to this, with what pleasure I made this day's march! I was able to admire to the full the grand, precipitous, glistening limestone rocks, the beautiful fruit gardens which extend along the gorge for 10 versts (6⅔ miles), like a continuous wood; the rushing, bubbling river, now boiling in whirlpools, now descending in waterfalls, dashing a thousand jets of spray over the walls enclosing the stream on either side. In the gorge there are villages situated at various distances apart, the dome-shaped houses of which, like beehives in an endless bee-garden, peep out here and there from amongst the groves of trees. Apricots, peaches, and vineyards were also seen. Here and there the gardens or orchards cease and give place to corn-fields, though, it is true, on a miniature scale. The Indian-corn and millet were already out in ear.

The whole defile was literally filled with golden sun-light.

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About 10 miles from Haibak the gardens ceased, the miniature corn-fields for a short distance further contested the possession of the gorge with the rocky masses, which encroached more and more. Soon, however, they too disappeared, and the gorge assumed a gloomy, but nevertheless a majestic character.

The road through the gorge is only practicable for pack animals; *arabas* could not pass here in many places.

The road sometimes runs along the very bank of the river, and sometimes clings to cornices running high above its bed, changes from one bank to the other and winds about. At the places where it changes from one bank to another, good stone bridges are built, wide enough for two horsemen easily to cross abreast. In some places the road is covered with coarse, round pebbles, cobbles, and fragments of the neighbouring rocks. At these points the road requires great care on the part of the rider. It is more than risky to ride anything but a sure-footed horse over these places.

But now the drum beats, and all halt. This is exactly half way on the march; men and horses must be rested and then forward again!

The deadly uniformity of the gorge for several versts, even though it is so grand, commences to weary one. Rocks and stones, stones and whirlpools, then more rocks and stones, bare, deathlike, and desert! Not a sprig of green overshadows these wild rocks. Will gardens begin again soon? Several times the defile has branched out and thrown off lateral ravines in various directions, but its character has remained the same.

Suddenly, after a bend, a grove of giant apricot trees meets the eye, close up to the right wall of the gorge; then, one after the other, little gardens, each with the inevitable dome-shaped house, each in its own thicket. The walls of the gorge gradually open out; the rocks become less perpendicular; miniature fields again appeared. Is Sar-bágh close? "One kroh," replies Mossin Khán. Kroh! What kind of measure is this? It is an Afghán, or rather Indian, measure = 4,000 paces. Four thousand paces; this is not much. But we did according to our calculation more than this; along the sides of the road are thick gardens,

tempting one to rest under their shady bed; nevertheless there is no sign of the well-known tents. We again climbed up a high cornice, mounting higher and higher, and passed an empty village with ruined houses. Ruined houses! Deserted villages! And this in the beautiful garden with which the hollow was filled! What does this mean?* Golden apricots tempt one, and walnuts hang over one's very head; one has only to stretch out one's hand to pluck them. Here we also saw rice-fields, far below at our feet. Then another descent, a verst's ride through thick gardens, and finally we are at Sar-bágh.

Sar-bágh is such a curious place that it is difficult to give a simple description of it. However, I will try to do so.

Our tents were pitched in a shady garden, on beautiful green turf. The garden, which consisted almost entirely of fruit trees except a few elms and chinárs, occupied a small area, bounded on three sides by precipitous schist rocks. From out of this rock broke forth three fine springs, dividing, in their course, our green camp into several little islands. The clearness, purity, and taste of this water were excellent.

I should say that in almost all the villages which we had passed through, commencing from Tásh-Kúrgán, the chinár (plane) tree inevitably appears, as if bearing witness to the mighty vegetation here. I must remark, too, that there is nothing more majestic or beautiful in the vegetable world of Central Asia than these trees. Even the elm cannot, in my opinion, bear comparison with the chinár. Immediately on reaching the camp the locality was carefully explored by myself and the topographer. To-day the General permitted us to make a little excursion in the neighbourhood. This time we were accompanied by an Afghán escort.

On the following day, at 8 A.M., we were again starting. Throughout this march, 13 versts (8⅔ miles) in length, the road runs through a continuously cultivated and thickly-wooded locality. This is the same defile we were passing through yesterday, in places widening out and again contracting, but everywhere cultivated. It appears like one continuous garden. And what luxurious vegetation there is here! In the village of Khuram I saw stems of vines a foot thick. A great many barberry bushes were also to be seen, which proved the possibility of growing them here alongside of the vine: this is not a usual spectacle in Russian Turkistán.

The road from Sar-bágh to Khuram runs at first for a distance of 2 versts (1⅓ mile) due south, and then turns sharply to the west, inclining here from the Khúlm River to the right. But afterwards, in 3 or 4 versts (2 to 2⅔ miles), having passed the village of Gazi-Mazár,† it again turns south. It then winds in conformity with the bends of the River Khúlm, which it crosses several times from one bank to the other; at these places there are good stone bridges on piers built everywhere.

A small halt was made half way. The Debír entertained us here with dried fruit and tea.

The road then keeps a general south-east direction, especially for 2 or 3 versts up to Khuram and through it. Here the gorge, still bounded by the same gigantic rocks, almost everywhere precipitous and excessively

* Moorcroft says that this village was destroyed by the celebrated Murád Beg, the Kundúz robber, in 1823.

† Probably Gházi-Mazár.

picturesque, widens sufficiently to allow of pretty large plots to be cultivated for growing various grains. We rode for some time through fields covered with a thick crop of uncut wheat; millet was hardly in ear yet. On our way through the village, which extended for 2 or 3 versts, a great many mosques were met with. I turned my attention to this point and ascertained that Khuram was chiefly inhabited by Musulman priests. The land forms their own unalienable property, and even the Amírs of Kábul cannot dispose of it at their will.

The Debír, upon this, informed us that not only the Mission, but he himself, the Debír, and the Afghán escort accompanying him, were nothing more than guests here. He therefore begged the Mission not to be exacting if the entertainment here was not so good as he himself supplied us with. But who understands the meaning of entertainment better than the priestly fathers of every country and religion? It is sufficient to say that the best liquor has been invented by the Benedictine monks. The Mullas of Khuram did not behave scurvily, but entertained the "Káfirs" well, *i.e.*, they sent us fruits and plenty of *Sháshlik* (pilau). The dinner of the reverend Musulman fathers was washed down with Russian Madeira.

On this day some of the Cossacks could not resist the temptation and bathed in the river. I think it was only the proximity of the rather broad, deep river, which tempted them. The temperature of the air for the last three days has been very mild. At Sar-bágh at 2 P.M. it was 84·2° F., and here in Khuram at 1 P.M., 86·3° F. These figures are not at all high in comparison with the temperature we had had in the steppe districts of Afghán Turkistán, where the usual thing was 104 to 106° F. They acquire more significance when I add that the morning and evening temperature (at 7 o'clock) for Sar-bágh was 82·75° F. and 80·6° F., and for Khuram 76·3° and 75°. From these figures it will be seen that the great variations of temperature for the 24 hours observed in the steppes of Afghán Turkistán did not prevail here. The small variation of the temperature, the purity of the air, and the fine locality through which we had now marched for three days, had this effect, that no further cases of fever occurred amongst the Mission. The Cossacks again recovered their cheerfulness; songs were heard again, which had been silenced since the time of the fever epidemic at Mazár-i-Sharíf.

Thank heaven we have not to get up and start in the middle of the night; the very earliest is now 6 A.M. To-day is the 14th (26th) July, and we have crossed the first pass in the system of the Hindu Kúsh on the Bámián road. The road for the first 7 or 8 versts (4⅔ to 5⅓ miles) from Khuram runs through the same gorge which commenced at Haibak. Beyond the village of Pul-i-áb-jili a stone bridge over the River Khúlm leads us to its right bank. Immediately afterwards the road, leaving the river on the right, commences to ascend a hill. The road, at first broad, as it ascends the hill, becomes a narrow path cut in the rocky bed. The ascent extends for 2 versts (1⅓ miles). Then, having reached the highest point of the ascent, the road runs for some time over an almost horizontal plateau. A small descent then leads us into a narrow, waterless valley, which in its turn ends in a very narrow gorge, blocked with stones. Beyond this gorge again extends a pretty broad valley, leading to a second ascent. But here is a descent again. Here we only have to descend in order, in a few minutes, to again ascend a still higher pass. This is the pass mentioned above, and is really

the Chambarak, although the whole group of passes between Khuram and Rui bear this name. Before ascending the last, *i.e.*, the third pass, the road turns sharply to the west. Having ascended a very steep slope by a zig-zag, it reaches the highest point of the pass, when the road, for a distance of ¼ verst (⅙ mile) is literally worn in the slippery rock. The greater number of us here went on foot, but Mossin Khán made nothing of it; his cat-like Katagháni pony did not even know that this was a difficult and slippery road; he does not even discriminate between whether there is a road or not; if there is only some crack in the rock for him he at once places his hoof on it; it remains as if glued to the rock; consequently it is in no way surprising that Mossin Khán preferred to ride on straight. He did not pay the least attention to the road; the reins were loose on the pommel, and he did not even move a finger to show the horse the road. However, it would be quite superfluous for him to do so; the Katagháni knows the road and character of the surface better than any rider; he does not make a single false step; the mountains are his element. And what a wretched-looking beast to look at! He simply looked worth nothing,—small, ugly, hump-backed, long-eared, and, in addition, with a well-worn back. Nevertheless this beast became an object of envy to all of us. Once the General asked Mossin Khán how much he would take for his horse? "I won't take anything," replied he, giving him to understand that this horse was priceless in his eyes. He was not only a good judge of horses, but a great lover of them. You must not think that he obtained his horses in the same manner as other people,—that is, by simply buying them when full-grown in some Katagháni village. Not at all. He first ascertained who had good mares; then he obtained several young colts and reared them at his house. Up to four years old he did not use them for difficult journeys, but by degrees trained them to riding, and developed in them those qualities which struck the eye of an outsider. He said on this subject that it is by no means every colt selected by him that turns out well and satisfies all the requirements desired by him. Out of ten colts perhaps two or three turn out suitable, seldom more. He teaches his horses two paces: the so-called "*tropota*," or "pacing," and the gallop. Both paces leave nothing to be desired; the "pacing" of his Katagháni gets over 15 versts (10 miles) an hour.

At almost the highest point of the pass, forming the bare summit of a limestone ridge, some *archa* trees (juniper) grow. These were the only trees I had seen up till now in this country growing in a natural state, *i.e.*, not planted by the hands of man. All the vegetation, and, one must remark, very thick vegetation, which I have yet observed, is the work of human hands. I saw no natural woods, either in the hills or the valleys. The path wound round the highest point of the pass and commenced to descend a gently inclining plateau. Far below, to the west, was seen an extensive valley, and it was in the direction of the valley that we were descending. The descent extended for 6 or 7 versts (4 to 4¾ miles). Having descended, the Khúlm stream was again before us; here, too, was a good stone bridge, thrown from one bank of the river to the other. In this extensive hill valley, which spread out before us, at a few paces from the stream the tents ready pitched awaited the wearied and thirsty travellers. Along the road, throughout the whole length of the pass, not a drop of water was procurable.

The valley of Rui, into which we had descended, is almost a square

area, with a breadth of 5 versts (3⅓ miles). The hills surrounding it are not high and have generally a rather gentle trace. On the north alone is seen a narrow gorge, bounded by crenelated walls and traversed by the River Khúlm. At a few paces from our halting-ground up the river (*i.e.*, to the south) was a caravansarai. It was built like a small fortification; around it were scattered some mud huts and felt *yurts*. The valley was partly covered with corn-fields of wheat, at that time scarcely ripe. Most of the space was occupied by pasture land. Mossin Khán informed us that two large villages were situated a few versts from our camp, from which without trouble forage and provisions for a considerably larger detachment than our cavalcade could be supplied (our cavalcade, with the Afghán cavalry and infantry escorts, amounted to 500 men and 400 horses and donkeys).

Dúáb.—To-day (*i.e.*, 15th = 27th July) we again made a rather long march, namely, 27 versts (18 miles). We at first went up the Rui Valley, sown with wheat and millet. The River Khúlm was soon left to the left (east). After this our route for some time followed the valley of the Rui stream, which was very winding and very shallow. In a distance of 4 versts (2⅔ miles) we had to cross it 8 times by fords. At 6 versts from the Rui halting-ground the Rui stream was left on our right. The road here bifurcates; one branch leads straight through a gorge or defile; the other branch turns it by the right, ascending a high pass in doing so. Our baggage train went by this latter route, but we rode straight on through the gorge. I have never seen anything like this gorge, either before or since. It was not a gorge; it was simply a rift, a cleft in the solid mountain, having a length of 2 versts (1⅓ miles). In places the gorge was so narrow *that the sky could not be seen at all; a horseman could scarcely ride in single file; it was quite impossible for two to ride abreast.* In some places the knees of the horseman and the stirrups grated against the sides of the rift. Its breadth at these places was only 1½ arshins (3½ feet). In places the rift opened out to 10 to 15 sajénes (70 to 105 feet), but not more. One could only determine the height of the walls of the gorge in these wider places, and they reached 300 to 400 feet. You felt yourself in this rift as if in a dungeon. All round you was a semi-gloom which only changed to a bright belt of light where the gorge opened out. The walls of the rift for a height of 4 to 6 feet were polished smooth—an undoubted proof that this rift was formed by the washing away of the rock by a mountain torrent. As, at the time we passed, the bed of the rift was quite dry, although sprinkled with fine pebbles and detritus, it was evident that a stream only flowed through in spring at the time of the melting of the snows and also during the rains. I should not like to find myself here at the time of a sudden storm and downpour. In places the rift was encumbered with heaps of rock which had lately fallen down. Of one such heap the Debír said that it had only fallen a few days before. Something similar might have happened during our passage through; it might have, but it did not. If it had, our curiosity would have cost us very dear. However, we now rode along with the greatest caution. In front of us at various distances rode Afghán horsemen as scouts. All rode in the deepest silence; the trumpeter did not even sound his trumpet, and the drummer was not even with us; he, with his two drums slung on each side of his saddle, could not have passed through here. At last, however, a bright

belt of light appeared, and in a few minutes we rode out of this defile into a small hill glade, where we joined our baggage train.

We then had to ascend a low but rather steep pass over a mountain spur. The descent from it, which was not steep or long, again brought us to the valley of the River Khúlm. Here the valley was very narrow, surrounded by not very high but almost precipitous rocks. It was remarkable that the section of these rocks had such a trace that they seemed to consist of several layers, of various thicknesses, placed one over the other quite horizontally. Up to this time I had seen the strata either vertical or inclined at an angle, or mixed up in various directions. The rocks, too, conforming to this disposition of the strata, rise, terrace-like, one above the other. The River Khúlm is here no bigger than a broad brook. It is contiguous to the road on the left and accompanies it up to the village of Dúáb.

When we rode into the valley just described, we saw in the middle of it a mounted group, formed up in two or three ranks. These horsemen were nothing but the local mountain inhabitants, Hazáras, who had collected to receive and accompany the Mission. They were on the right side of the river, whilst we were riding on the left side of it. This new escort saluted the Mission from a distance and then rode parallel with it, but throughout the march on the opposite bank of the river.

Outwardly the horsemen did not differ from the Afgháns; the same conical, shaggy, sheepskin hats, the same cotton coats, and long unblacked boots. Their horses were of small size, and chiefly of a grey colour. Unfortunately I can say nothing about the type of face of the horsemen, as throughout the ride they kept at some distance from us; but I noticed amongst them a novelty in dress which some of them had,—a movable leather peak attached to their conical hat. This peak could be moved at will from the forehead to the back of the neck or to the temples without moving the hat. Several times the whole group set off at a gallop with a shout, and, having galloped about a verst, halted and waited for us, and then again moved on at a walk.

The narrow little valley of the river was here carefully cultivated. If there was any plot along the banks fit for ploughing, it had been once dug up and sown. And what splendid wheat was growing on these plots of ground!—high, thick, full-eared, but still quite green. Although the situation here is so elevated that in all probability there is no great summer heat,—and there is reason for supposing that rain falls, even in summer,—nevertheless irrigation channels were to be seen sometimes, clinging to the precipitous rocks or running over the very bed of the stream in wooden troughs. Everywhere it was plain that the local inhabitants were much in need of fields for growing corn, and did not fail to make use of even the smallest plots of ground fit for cultivation.

Wherever we went in this beautiful little valley, we had several times to cross from one side of the stream to the other by very indifferent wooden bridges. However, these bridges were here quite unnecessary, as the river is not deep and can be easily forded wherever desired, which was done several times by the Hazáras before our eyes. I even think that the bridges had been hastily run up specially for the Mission, which was evident from the newness and lightness of their construction.

But here is an ascent again. On this occasion the River Khúlm rises up with us, forming here a series of effective waterfalls and

cascades. In a distance of nearly 2 versts (1⅓ miles) the river rises from 200 to 300 feet by uninterrupted cascades.

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At the foot of the waterfalls, at the time of our passing, a group of travellers had halted. Some caravan, probably from India, halted here for rest. But, curiously enough, there were women and even children here with them; so this could hardly be a trading caravan.* The type of the men reminded us of our gypsies. It was noticeable that the women with the caravan were unveiled, were not confused at meeting us, and did not try to hide themselves on seeing strange men.

When we had passed the waterfalls, the road again ran over a level locality. The valley was here occupied by uninterrupted fields, divided into small plots. In some places there were lucerne beds finer and more fragrant than I had ever seen at Táskhand. In the places where the river overflows, emerging from its bed, fringed with emerald-green banks, there are miniature meadows. The rocks, surrounding the valley on both sides, are still, however, as lofty and lifeless as before; there is not a bush upon them, not a blade of grass. Finally, a large village appeared in the distance, and they told us that our camping-ground would be there. Now we have reached it. Near a tree, which proved to be a very old willow, was the "fort," or tower of Dúáb.

But it was a very poor fort. However, if I call by this high-sounding name the four-cornered mud enclosure, with its half-ruined little towers at the four corners, which was before my eyes, it is only in imitation of our powerful and enlightened predecessors in Afghánistán, the sons of crafty Albion; for the ordinary type of Central Asian villages was christened and given the name of fort by English travellers from the time of Moorcroft. As these forts, or fortlets, will be often met with by us further on, I consider that it will not be out of place to give a short account of them here.

Before you is a large or small rectangular enclosure, rarely a square; all the sides of the rectangle consist of mud walls, 7 to 14 feet high; the walls are sometimes loopholed. At all the four corners of the rectangle are round, and sometimes polygonal, towers of various diameter and height. The roof of the towers is dome-shaped or flat. The thickness of the walls of the rectangle are up to 2 arshins (4⅔ feet). Narrow windows are made in the towers, which may be looked on as loopholes. In the centre of one of the walls are rather wide gates, closed with folding-doors. If you go inside one of the rectangular enclosures, you see that on two opposite sides of it dwelling-houses are constructed. These are simply a row of mud huts, generally made in a very rough and dirty manner; the roofs of the huts are sometimes dome-shaped (especially in places inhabited by Uzbaks), sometimes flat (chiefly in the Bámián, Irák, and upper part of the Kábul valleys). Along the third, and sometimes the fourth walls, are built sheds for cattle, horses, camels, &c. On the roofs of the houses are generally stacked stores of clover, straw, and also unground corn.

The towers generally play a double rôle,—as store-houses and places of defence. They consequently consist of two storeys; in the lower are usually placed the various household utensils, and the upper is quite empty and has the loopholes I mentioned above.

* The Powindahs generally have their families with them.—*Translator.*

These "forts" are of various sizes, from that of a small caravansarai to a rectangle of 210 to 280 feet side.

There are generally no wells in them, but a stream often runs through them, or the sources of a stream are even found in them. Most frequently, however, these villages stand on the banks of a stream.

The village of Dúáb forms a "fort" of this type. Now, however, the times must have greatly changed since the period when Burnes passed by here and "*alamans*"* flourished. Two of the walls of the village had fallen down, and not been rebuilt. Evidently their renewal was unnecessary, as there is no longer any fear of robbers. Nevertheless, the very existence of such a type of construction clearly testifies to the want of order and the turbulent condition of the life of the community, which used to be the usual state of affairs in this country.

If the general state of insecurity has died out, compared with the time when Burnes visited these places, yet the physical characteristics of the country have undoubtedly remained the same. I altogether share the ecstacy of the English traveller in contemplating this verdant valley, covered with emerald pasture; but I allow that I do not understand his description of the Dúáb Valley, namely, that part of the description where he speaks of the terrible overhanging rocks, shutting out all the stars at night, except those dimly showing at their zenith. At the village of Dúáb itself, the valley is rather wide, and I could clearly observe the Polar Star. I do not think that Burnes, at the place mentioned, could be speaking of the rift through which we had passed, 6 versts (4 miles) from Rui, as not only are loaded camels, but even loaded horses, unable to pass through it; and he passed with a baggage caravan. It is impossible even for mounted men riding light to pass through at night. This part of Burnes' description seems more likely to refer to the Kára Kotal Pass, but the defile of this pass is 13 versts (8⅔ miles) south-east of Dúáb. Burnes, however, says: "We passed near the village of Dúáb in the bed of the stream and went up it through terrible perpendicular rocks." As Burnes was travelling from south to north, it is evident that the phrase "we passed near the village of Dúáb" cannot refer to the Kára Kotal Pass. We must, therefore, come to the conclusion that the English traveller may have described the route only in its general outlines, as he was placed in an unsuitable position for doing otherwise. Reading his description of Bámián route I am strongly inclined to think that he was sometimes unable to describe the route day by day, the result of which has been to produce indistinctness in his text.†

Burslem, another English traveller, who was here in 1840, relates that at some miles south of the village of Dúáb is a remarkable cavern, formed in a perpetual and extensive glacier and called "Ermallik." But it is not the glacier which makes this cavern remarkable; according to Burslem there are in it several hundred human skulls.‡ Here was an anthopological store, if I may be allowed the expression, which was at the present time a great allurement to me. I much wished to visit the cavern and to carry off, if not a whole skeleton, at all events several skulls. The Colonel and "the Naturalist" (topographer) equally shared my desire. There would have been no difficulty in carrying out this

* Turkumán raid.—*Translator.*

† Burnes' "Travels to Bokhára," Volume II, page 286.

‡ Burslem: "A Peep into Turkistán," pages 110-11.

wish, as we reached camp pretty early; it was not more than 11 o'colck in the morning, and one could easily have made this small excursion before evening. The General, however, would not consent to this trip, although his refusal was softened down by the promise of our seeing everything on our return journey.

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On the following day, the 16th (28th July), we traversed two passes—the Kizil Kotal and Kára Kotal. Both of them agree with their names. Kizil Kotal means "the red" and Kára Kotal "the black pass." But I will not conduct the reader all at once to the passes, but gradually; first we had to cross by a ford the stream, or more properly the brook, of the Áb-i-Akhúrak, which flowed into the Khúlm stream a few yards above our camp. The village of Dúáb owes its name to the fact of being at the junction of two streams—*dú*, "two;" and *áb*, "brook" (water). The Áb-i-Akhúrak is a narrow, dirty stream, flowing out of a gorge, situated due south of Dúáb.

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Now, for a distance of several versts (4 to 5 in all = 2⅔ to 3⅓ miles), unless you have confidence in your horse, you must look well to his feet; the road clings to cornices, not high ones, it is true, but strewn with detritus and round stones. At the 6th verst (4th mile) from the halting-ground, the road turns sharp to the south and runs for some distance in a gorge, presenting, however, nothing of a remarkable character. Then an ascent commences, long, stony, and over an open hill slope. After three quarters of an hour's march you reach the saddle-backed summit of the pass, the colour of the soil of which is quite red. This is the Kizil Kotal. The descent from it is very steep, but on soft ground, and the road is so wide that it presents no difficulties even for the passage of an *araba* (or cart). You then descend into a small valley with marshy soil; springs occur in places during the passage of this valley. In the middle of the valley, the breadth of which does not exceed half a mile, flows a brook, bordered by very marshy banks. This is the source of the Khúlm River. Sometimes corn-fields, yet scarcely in ear, occur. The slopes of the hills are gentle and covered with good succulent grass. The hollow extends from north to south for 5 or 6 versts (3⅓ to 4 miles); throughout its whole extent there is not a single tree. On the left, at the time we passed, a large drove of horses were feeding on the rounded hill slopes, and a little higher up were seen several *yurts*, in which the owners of the drove lived.

Here is the ascent to the Kára Kotal. The horses began to show stubbornness and did not wish to go into the muddy and very sticky marsh at the foot of the slope of the hill. But a good whack with the whip had its effect, and in a few minutes we were climbing up the path which bifurcated up the side of the giant mountain. We chose the right path, which, though longer than the left one, was not so steep and the soil was softer. I must say, however, that the ascent to the pass was pretty steep and *arabas* could not have gone up it.

Here is the summit of the pass. According to Burnes the height of the pass is 10,500 feet. The road leading from the summit is at first, for a distance of 2 or 3 versts (1⅓ to 2 miles), very gently sloping and good. It is soon accompanied by a brook, the sources of which are near a poor caravansarai, only fit to give protection and shelter to a

caravan exposed to a snowstorm in winter time. The descent then becomes very steep; it is much strewn with stones and only practicable here for pack animals. At the 16th verst (10⅔ miles) from Dúáb, where the descent reaches an open space, there is a fortlet, near which a copious spring of water has its source. The fortlet, sheltered by the precipitous right side of the gorge, completely bars the entrance to it. On the south side it is in contact with the rocks; on the west side the mountain rises steeply up to almost the same height as the remainder of the surrounding hills. From the mountain ridge named a well-beaten path leads into the gorge under the very walls of the fort. I did not succeed in ascertaining where this path led to.

From the fort itself the descent extends for half an hour's ride along the road and is impracticable for wheeled carriage. The path winds steeply down a narrow gorge, terribly blocked with fragments of the overhanging rocks, which enclose it on both sides. For some distance the road is intersected by a brook, carried noisily down the steep windings of the path. The longer you continue to descend, the higher rise the vertical rocks over your head, hemming in the gorge, which is 35 to 70 feet wide. But those 35 to 70 feet comprise the whole width of the gorge; so, naturally, the path fit for riding on has only a breadth of a few feet; in some places it forks into two, but remains very indifferent and even dangerous. I do not exaggerate in fixing the height of the vertical walls of the gorge at 1,000 feet. Here, at the bottom of this gorge, the rays of the sun actually never shine; a perpetual twilight reigns here; and consequently it seems gloomy. One is now able to understand the name of the pass, Kára Kotal, *i.e.*, the black defile.* We continued to descend uninterruptedly; the bottom of this descent could not be seen. It was as if it led to hell. The optical delusion into which this linear perspective leads one is unbearable. It appears to you that the end of the descent is here at the nearest turn. You reach this turn and see that the gaping gorge continues to descend further and further, and disappears round the angle of the next turn. Finally, impatient exclamations were heard amongst us of "When will this terrible descent end?" Mossin Khán only laughed self-complacently in his beard; for he had already told us several days before about the difficulties of the march through the Kára Kotal Pass. But even in the gloomy horizon of an autumn sky the cheerful sunbeams sometimes break through, and in the midst of gloomy reflections a wholly unexpected bright thought, some playful freak of fancy, will suddenly flash upon one. In the same way, too, our gloomy gorge suddenly changed into an extensive glade, strewn with fine pebbles. This glade was filled with floods of sunshine when we rode into it. I looked back and was much surprised at not seeing the entrance to the gorge; the change was such a rapid one. There were only the rocks, like the gigantic walls of a fortress, rising vertically behind us, almost to the very clouds. The brook was soon completely lost in its bed, which was full of fine pebbles and detritus, and disappeared. We rode through this glade for 20 minutes, the route then again contracted, and we had to traverse a path over a low mountain spur. On the left was seen the last remaining gigantic vertical cliff. It consisted of argillaceous schist, the strata of which were vertical. If you looked sideways, you could see what wide

* Thus in original, but Kotal is never used in this sense; it is the *top* of a pass or "col."—*Translator.*

crevices divide this rock into several vertical layers. It seems as if these detached layers would at once fall down, and it is impossible for one to imagine what a chaos of fragments there would be to fill up the narrow winding path! From out of this cliff appears a fine spring, with pure water, clear as crystal, and it breaks, with its cheerful murmuring, the severe silence of the neighbouring rocky giants. As soon, too, as moisture appeared, vegetation showed itself. The banks of the brook were fringed with bushes of willow and poplar. The gorge soon finally opens out and gives place to the valley of Madair, which attains in some places a width of 2 miles. The valley has a stony slope to the south, and so naturally the descent from the Kára Kotal still continues. This descent, if you include the valley of Madair in it as far as the Bajgákh gorge, has a length of 8 miles.

Signs of the valley being inhabited now show themselves; before us lies an orchard of apricot trees, and in it are seen several houses. In one of the groves are raised up several poles, with dirty rags on them, marking the resting-place of some holy Musulman. A pile of sheeps' horns, too, placed on the garden wall and on the low mud one of the tomb, still further confirm us in our supposition. Cultivated fields already extend here on both sides of the road. The General drew my attention to the phenomenon that the crops here were already cut, whereas at Rui the wheat was not yet in ear and at Dúáb was still quite green.

From English information (*Moorcroft, Burslem*) the height of the valley of Madair above the level of the sea is 5,500 feet. Taking into consideration the height of this valley and that of the Kára Kotal, I am in no way surprised that Burslem reckoned this pass to be almost the highest throughout the whole Bámián route.* Its relative height is really rather greater than that of all the other passes on the Bámián route, except perhaps the Kalu Pass, which attains a height of 13,000 feet, rising 8,500 feet above the Bámián Valley, or almost the same height as the Kára Kotal above the Madair Valley.

With reference to the practicability of the descent from the Kára Kotal Pass, I must say that it presents insurmountable difficulties for wheeled carriage. The chief inconvenience is that you cannot clear the descent, for there is nowhere to take the enormous heaps of rubbish and stones to which block the path in the gorge.

"But," some of my readers will perhaps exclaim to me, "how did the Afgháns take their rather heavy artillery to Turkistán if the road is so impassable?" To this I reply that they were guns, not carriages, and the experience of our late wars has proved that they can be dragged over almost impracticable paths.† I only speak of the impracticability of the road for wheeled vehicles. But our conical-shaped tent now comes in to view. Let us halt and look round.

Madair is a valley, in the midst of which is a small fort, or fortlet. Its length, commencing from the spot where the brook rises, and ending at the Bajgákh gorge which terminates it on the south, amounts to 6 or 7 versts (4 to 4⅔ miles). The valley gradually opens out in a southerly direction. On the right, at 2 versts from the Bajgákh gorge, it joins another mountain basin, almost identical with it in length and breadth.

* Burslem: "A Peep into Turkistán," page 95.

† Gourkho's Passage of the Balkans, 1877-78.—*Translator*

In the middle of this latter basin is seen a rather extensive village, with shady gardens. This valley is called by the name of the gorge, Bajgákh, and, like the Madair, the greater portion of it is covered with fields, the corn from which was also already cut. A brook flows through it which joins the Madair spring almost in the Bajgákh gorge, and forms the Bajgákh stream, 2 or 3 sajénes (14 to 21 feet) broad and 2 or 3 feet deep.

I can only suppose that the pass seen by me from the Kára Kotal Pass, and which went winding away several versts to the right (west) of it and of the road by which we had just come, led to this village. This supposition is, to a great extent, confirmed by the information, which I received much later, that from Mazár-i-Sharíf there exist two other routes besides the usual one to Bámián by Khúlm :—

(1) By Mur-i-Már, the summer residence of the Luïnáb ; this road comes out on the usual Bámián caravan road at Haibak.

(2) By the Yúsuf-dara gorge, or defile ; this road runs due south from Tahht-i-pul, and comes out in the Bámián road in the Kahmard Valley, avoiding the Kára Kotal Pass.

It is highly probable that this latter road also leads to the village of Bajgákh, joining the Kára Kotal road in the Bajgákh defile. From Afghán accounts (*the Debír Mossin Khán*) this road is considerably shorter than the usual so-called main caravan road, which we were now travelling by. The "Chapars," or Afghán postmen, generally used the shorter road.*

I have already said that the Madair Valley is well cultivated ; irrigation channels run from the brook, already known to the reader, in places rising to a height of several dozen feet above the general level of the valley. One of these, on the left of the valley, if one may so express oneself, runs along a very steep slope. If one pays greater attention to this slope, one can see something unusual in its outline. Following its convexities and concavities it is impossible not to form the idea that before you are the remains of a cave town, which once existed here, now almost completely filled in by the detritus from the mountains, which here consist of indurated earth and conglomerate. The concavities on the slope are the remains of caverns.

The most southerly of them are still inhabited, and I saw several men go in and come out of the mouths of these half-filled-in caves. In some places, especially on the slope of the mountain cape separating the two neighbouring valleys of Madair and Bajgákh, the caves were disposed in several storeys. Of course, I questioned the Afgháns as to the former history of these caves, and the reader may infallibly guess what answer I received—"Káfirs used to live here, at a remote period"—and that was all.†

* It is very probable that Conolly in 1840 went from the Bajgákh defile by this road, as he left the Kára Kotal on his right.

† This locality has, however, entered into the geographical treatises of some Arab writers. This is what we read, for instance, in Edrisi (who died 1154 A.D.): "The itinerary from Balkh to Madair is as follows: From Balkh to Madair, a small town, built on a plain, a short distance from mountains. Five days' journey from Madair to Kah (Kah-mard), a populous place, with a bazar and mosque, where they read the "Khutba," 1 day's journey. From Kah to Námián (Bámián) 3 days' journey."—*Edrisi's Geography*, translated by A. Joubert, Paris, 1836, Volume 1, page 477.

It must, however, be noticed that the route given by the celebrated geographer is not very accurate, unless he has in view the shortest route, namely, that which I have mentioned, avoiding Khúlm by the Yúsuf-dara defile. In the Arab writers and geographers who

On the following day at 5 A.M. we again continued our journey. On this occasion we had to traverse places mentioned in the pages of the latest history of the Afghán kingdom. Here before us lies the Bajgákh defile, steeped in blood. Here Afzal Khán, the brother of Amír Shír Ali Khán, and his son Abdur Rahmán Khán, disputed with Shír Ali the sovereignty for the pitiful remains of the Duránian empire. On the 3rd July (15th) 1864, the troops of the antagonists met together in fratricidal strife. Shír Ali Khán, reinforced at the right time by the detachment of Sardár Muhammad Rafík Khán, remained victorious, and became, in consequence, the possessor of Kábul. But it is well known that very soon after this event the but lately defeated adversary of Shír Ali Khán succeeded in completely dislodging him from Kábul. The series of unsuccessful combats in which Shír Ali engaged with his antagonists at Saidábád and Kelát-i-Ghilzai so weakened him that the victory of his ally, the Governor-General of Balkh, Faiz Muhammad Khán, posted in this defile in 1867, over Sarwar Khán, the partisan of Afzal Khán, had no decisive influence on the further course of the intestine strife of the brothers.

The Bajgákh defile on the north, *i.e.*, the side from which we entered it, is closed by a fortification, placed on a rocky bluff on the left side of the gorge. This was the first burnt-brick building I had seen in Afghánistán. To storm it from the valley side was quite impossible, and with its artillery it can completely bar the entrance and exit to the defile. I do not know whether there is any other road out of the Kahmard Valley into that of Madair which turns this defile, and consequently its fort. At the present time the fort was not occupied by troops and was at the disposal of the elements, which had not been slow to begin their destructive work.

The length of the road through the Bajgákh defile does not exceed 1,500 paces, its greatest width 200. Almost in the centre of it flows the Bajgákh stream. The height of the walls of the defile is simply astonishing. I think I am not mistaken in giving the height, as measured by the eye, at 1,000 feet. Imagine a vertical cliff of that height! It is almost incomprehensible. The layers of schist of which the walls of the defile consist are sharply tilted up on edge, their slope being in both directions, so that in a section of the whole mass of the hill you obtain the figure of an elongated triangle. On the right, at a height of 200 or 300 feet above the stream, is seen an enormous niche, and in it the opening of caves placed in several storeys. Besides these caves, the half-ruined remains of mud houses are also visible. To this "village of troglodites," as we called it, an exceedingly steep path leads. I did not perceive any outward sign of this original village being inhabited. I much wished to clamber up to this enigmatical niche, which probably had no less enigmatical remains of its pre-historic inhabitants, but I received

wrote much earlier than Edrisi, and of whom he availed himself as sources of information, a different distance from Balkh to Madair is given, for we read in Istákhri, "From Balkh to Madair 6 stations (not 3 as in Edrisi); from Madair to Kah 1 station; from Kah to Bámián 3 stations."—*Al Istákhri*, translated by Mordtman into German, page 122.

Abuzaid and Mokadasi, contemporaries of Istákhri, give the same distances as Istáhri.—*Sprenger Abhandlungen*, III.—b. s.—44.

But now there are no signs of a town in the Madair Valley, and the geographers mentioned do not say a single word about the caves.

a promise to inspect everything on "the return journey," and we passed it by.

After this, at the very exit from the gorge, we crossed the Bajgákh stream by a very indifferent wooden bridge. Straight before us, at the southern end of the defile, rises another "castle," completely barring the issue from the Madair Valley, and defending the entrance to the Kahmard Valley. This "castle" is of historical importance. In 1840 it was the most northern point occupied by the British troops. Burslem, moreover, says the following about it: "The fort seemed a focus for all the rays of the sun, and was intensely hot, the thermometer ranging from 95° to 100° in the shade; nor was the situation healthy, for a great many Goorkhas were in hospital, and all were more or less debilitated from the effects of the climate."* To tell the truth, it would be difficult to find a place more unsuitable in a hygienic point of view for the construction of a more or less permanent residence for troops than this. The selection of this site is still the more incomprehensible that at a verst to the east of the fort is situated a fruit garden, where more suitable quarters for troops could have been constructed. On this subject Burslem quotes, in the most *àpropos* manner, the Latin proverb, "*Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*" It is known that the English garrison had to leave this fort owing to the insurrection of the Afgháns which broke out at Kábul.

Behind this fort again rises a very steep mountain of *sheet-rock*. I have purposely italicised this compound word. The mountain, or rather range of mountains, rises from the surface of the valley at an angle of 70° or 80° to an astonishing height (about 4,000 feet), and extends for many versts to the west and east of this fort, with a flat-sided rocky surface as smooth as if it had been polished. I at length ceased to be astonished at the unusual uniformity of contour of the mountain system of the Hindu Kúsh.

The valley of Kahmard extends in a narrow strip (the broadest part is not more than ⅔ of a mile) from east to west, or rather from, west to east, as the local stream flows in this direction. It is bordered on the north and south by two parallel ranges of rocky mountains. These ranges are of the same height, and rise to from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above the level of the valley.

At the "historical" fort our road turned sharply to the west, and throughout the whole march ran along the foot of the northern range of mountains. The southern range consists, as I have said, of continuous sheet-rock, 3,000 to 4,000 feet high, extending uninterruptedly for 20 to 25 versts (13⅓ to 16⅔ miles) and inclined at an angle of 70° to 80°. In places it is broken by narrow clefts; in places part of its armour—the superficial layer of argillaceous schist—has slipped down.

At a distance of 10 versts from the Bajgákh defile, the valley, or rather the basin of Kahmard, is a continuous field, almost exclusively sown with rice. The rice at this time was in stalk, and had not yet burst into ear. The rice-fields were much inundated. Occasionally clover-fields also occurred. In the middle of the valley winds the Kahmard stream, not very wide (up to 35 feet), but pretty deep (4 to 10 feet), which carries a large mass of clear, limpid water. In places it throws off irrigation channels, which sometimes attain a breadth of

* Burslem, page 85.

14 feet. In the river, at the places where it inundates the neighbouring fields, many fish were seen. Debír asked us if we eat fish, and, having received an answer in the affirmative, said that to-day he would entertain us with a "kabáb" (pilau) of fish. A fish pilau was quite a novelty for us, so we all willingly agreed to his proposal.

The banks of the stream were fringed with bushes of willow and the peculiar low-growing poplar, *jida* (wild date), apricot trees, &c. Amongst them barberry bushes were clearly distinguishable, literally laden with their reddening berries.

Almost in the middle of the valley, and consequently about 10 versts (6⅔ miles) from the Bajgákh defile, throughout the whole breadth of the valley, from one range of hills to the other, extends a low earthen rampart, strengthened in places with stones. At the southern hill range on the other side of the stream is a rectangular fort.

At 21 versts (14 miles) from our halting-ground, thick gardens commence in the Madair* Valley, and extend for 3 or 4 versts (2 to 2⅔ miles) uninterruptedly. In each garden there are one or more round huts in which the natives live. Occasionally caves occur, hollowed out in the vertical rocks, which here hem the valley in to a width of 100 to 200 sajénes (233 to 466 yards), and these are also inhabited. In the gardens the same vegetation is seen as at Tashkánd, at Samarkand, and generally throughout Turkistán. The same peach, apricot, vine, mulberry, walnut, plum, date, poplar and willow trees. At this time the peaches were still green, the apricots were already ripe, and in some orchards were being dried.

The drying of them is very simply carried out here. The ripe fruit is placed in a row on the ground, on grass or on felt, and dried in the sun. A week is enough for them to become as dry as they should be. The valley yields a great many apricots, and in some places I saw large spaces covered with the drying fruit. But their quantity is not so great as is stated by Burslem. "At this place (Kahmard)," he says, "there was a large quantity of fruit. I perceived that the slopes of the hills bordering the valley near our halting-ground were tinged with a bright yellow colour for a distance of 1½ miles. When I approached them, to ascertain the cause of this phenomenon, I found that the whole space was covered with apricots, placed in rows on the ground to dry."† Here we see neither more nor less than the pure invention of the tourist. The valley is not capable of producing such an enormous quantity of fruit, even if the gardens were planted entirely with apricot trees. Besides, I questioned the natives as to the greatest amount of fruit which the gardens could yield, and received in reply numbers much less than the above. I told them what Burslem said about it, but to this they replied, "The Englishman was boasting about the country." Walnuts and grapes were at this time not yet ripe, whilst Burslem, who was here at an earlier time of year than we were (14th June=26th June), praises the flavour of the grapes.‡ I wonder what grapes Burslem tasted? Even in the middle of August, when I passed through on my return from Kábul, the grapes here were still quite green.

* Mather on map.—*Translator.*

† "A Peep into Turkistán," page 77.

‡ "The grape, which is unequalled."

Five versts (3⅓ miles) before the commencement of the gardens, the Governor of Bámián met us. He was a kinsman of the Amír Shír Ali Khán. He was a man of middle age and medium height, strong physique, with pleasant manners and an intelligent appearance. While we were looking at the Sirdár, he saluted the General, bowed to the remaining members of the Mission, and rode on in conversation with the General.

There were 200 horsemen with Lál Muhammad Khán, who at once joined our escort. The greater part of them, as they afterwards informed us, were Hazáras. Amongst them was the Chief of the Hazáras of the Kálu District, Mír Bába. Again I was unable to inspect minutely this interesting people. Mír Bába was in no way distinguishable from a pure Afghán, except that he had not such an arched nose as an Afghán by blood. The Bámián Governor was in Afghán costume. Mír Bába was in a grey cotton *kaftán*, or coat, girded with a leather strap, and on his head had the usual conical hat. But here the road turned to the south and soon crossed to the other bank of the river. At this point the valley widens considerably. We cross the river on a good stone bridge, pass through a field, climb on to a low spur of the southern range of hills, and immediately after cross a broad irrigation channel, then go for 4 versts (2⅔ miles) through fields, passing several fortlets and reach our halting-ground. Our tents are pitched in a shady apricot grove.

To-day three sick men came to me, one of whom was a soldier of the infantry escort, and the other two inhabitants of the valley. They were all suffering from the conjunctive membrane of the eyes. Of course I treated them as far as possible, and also told them to send all other sick persons to me there might then be in the valley, and that I would willingly give them assistance. They must have carried out my orders, as after some time some more sick came, but unfortunately I was not at home, and the Afghán escort, who always surrounded our "residence for the day" with a triple chain of sentries, drove the poor creatures away and would not let them await my return.

I have already mentioned before that on reaching a camping-ground we always made enquiries about the road to the next one, and we had to read up all the information we had at hand about the route. This was the case, too, to-day. It was also a good thing to make small excursions in the neighbourhood of our halting-ground, in order to become acquainted with the locality there. In this valley, it was still more interesting to make such an excursion. Consequently, having obtained the General's permission, I took an Afghán guard of a dozen infantry, and started. The topographer also went with me. He took his compass and black book with him on every occasion.

It took almost an hour to reach the river, which was the object of our trip. I should never have thought that it was so far off from our camp, for we had followed its bank almost throughout the whole of to-day's march.

It now appeared, however, that at the point where we had to ascend the small spur, the river ran westwards as before, whereas the road we travelled turned due south. This was quite an unexpected discovery for the topographer. From the spot where we stood, the whole of this charming irregularly-oval mountain basin of Kahmard was visible.

Its greatest diameter amounted to from 8 to 10 versts (5⅓ to 6⅔ miles) and ran obliquely from east-north-east to west-south-west; its lesser diameter was 4 to 5 versts (2⅔ to 3⅓ miles), and ran from north to south.

On all sides the basin is surrounded by mighty mountains, simply overpowering you with the majestic grandeur of their relief. The northern chain was especially well seen from where we were, and rose almost perpendicularly 3,000 to 4,000 feet.

It is difficult to describe in words the varied tints of these gigantic rocks. There was no snow on their summits. The whole area of the valley was excellently cultivated. The fields, interspersed with gardens, groves, and towers or fortlets, extended along both sides of the river, which, where we stood, was 20 sajénes (140 feet) wide. The rapidity of the current was very great; in all probability its rate was not less than 4 to 5 feet a second (2¾ to 3½ miles an hour). The colour of the water was whitish. I took the temperature of the water and it was 64¾° F., whilst that of the air here was 75·8° F. This was about 5 P.M.

We passed half an hour on the river bank and then walked in the fields extending round us. Here the rice was already well grown, the millet was well in ear, and the wheat already cut. In some places the fields had not been sown and were lying fallow; in others they had just been ploughed. There, in the field, was lying the implement for ploughing, a wooden plough, unshod with iron, in no way different from that used by our Uzbaks and Kirghiz. Frequent irrigation channels cross our path, over which we had to jump, and over one, a very broad one, we were carried by our Afghán escort. Quail and partridges flew out of the grass and corn at our approach. The commander of the escort, and all the men accompanying us, were very friendly and communicative. Unfortunately the topographer and I knew little of Persian, otherwise we could have questioned them about much which interested us. Sometimes, when they wished to explain anything, the Afgháns had recourse to amusing pantomime; thus, the commander of the escort, wishing to explain to us the meaning of the "Dandán-Shikan" ascent, showed us that his teeth were aching, which had been broken by a fall from a mountain.* He also explained with difficulty that the Kahmard stream flows from the cleft of a rock, about 12 versts (8 miles) from here; that he was an inhabitant of this place, as well as several of the soldiers of the escort. The valley, so he said, is not now called the Kahmard, but the "Shashburj," or "six towers."

Meanwhile the valley was gradually being enveloped in the evening twilight, and only the summits of the eastern range of hills were still clothed in gold and purple, shed upon them by the setting sun. When we returned home, supper was ready, and we had fish-soup, made of trout caught in the stream. The trout were about 6 inches long, spotted with red spots, but there were also some *marinka* among them. The Afgháns kept their promise; they also prepared "*shashlik*" (kabáb) of the fish. To do this they first took off their skins and then roasted them on a spit.

Early the next morning, having first drunk "sweet tea," we mounted and again moved on. Here the ascent to the Dandán-Shikan commenced. On this occasion the baggage was sent on ahead. At the very commencement of the ascent an Afghán "*yábú*" (baggage pony) slipped and fell. On seeing the fallen horse, exhausting himself under

* *Dandán-Shikan*, the Tooth-breaker.

the weight of his load, the Debír, notwithstanding his importance and dignity, quickly dismounted from his "*yurgi*" (pacer) and actively assisted the driver to raise the horse. Two or three Afgháns quickly joined him, and the load was raised. I looked on at the Debír with great pleasure, throwing off his dignity, and working so heartily when required to, no whit worse than a common labourer. Very few of our commanders probably would be fit for such kind of work. So here, as in the time of Cyrus the Younger,* that healthy simplicity of manners was still noticeable which so distinguished the ancient Persians. Thus the "Tooth-breaker" had already justified its name; one horse had already fallen, without seeing anything, so to speak. What would happen further on!

Our cavalcade extended in a long line up the zig-zags of the narrow path, only fit for one horse, steep and slippery, winding over schist sheet-rock, in places polished smooth by the summer rains and winter snows, in others rent by the winter frosts and summer heat. I do not remember how often I halted to rest during the ascent to the pass, but will only state that I did so every 5 or 10 minutes. This ascent is not so difficult owing to its great steepness (in places, however, it is very steep), but chiefly because the road is inconceivably slippery. It is nothing but a water gutter, worn in the solid sheet-rock. To the right and left is the smooth surface of the rock, upon which one cannot take a single step. The Cossack Trekin tried the experiment, with what might have been disastrous results, if it had not been for good luck. I must remark that the General had ordered the Cossacks once for all to dismount in and on the mountains, and invariably to ascend and descend a pass on foot. Then the Cossacks thought of the following method of making the ascent of a pass easier for themselves. They drove on their horses in front and themselves followed behind, *holding on to the tail of the horse.* The horse thus dragged the Cossack up the hill by its tail. Trekin was now travelling in this manner. Suddenly his horse turned from the path and went on to the sloping rock. After a few steps both the horse and the Cossack who was being towed fell on their knees. It was lucky for them that the slope of the hill was not very great at this place.

The pass presented an interesting spectacle. Above, over my head, and below, under my feet, were scattered mounted figures, single and in groups, riding and walking on foot, resting, smoking, and even drinking. I would remark that we ascended the "Tooth-breaker" under the most favourable conditions. There had been no rains here for some time previously, which was one great point in our favour; the second was that the Bámián Governor had put the road in order as far as it was possible to do so. I saw that at the most slippery parts of the path notches had been cut in it, and in some places shingle, gravel and sand were thrown on it.

The whole ascent extends for four versts (2⅔ miles) and ends in a wide mountain plateau. Here we stopped for several minutes to allow the tired horses to rest. The height of the pass, according to Burslem, is about 9,000 feet.

From here an extensive view opens out over the surrounding mountain tracts. They are lifeless, and produce an unpleasing, depressing effect, with their grey and brown tints. The grass, even at this altitude, was

* Xenophon's Anabasis, Book I, Chap. V.

completely burnt up by the sun. In the neighbouring ravines were seen the high dry stems of some plant.

"Az in ja ta Kábul nisf-i-rah ast, Doctor Sahib," said the communicative Debír to me ("This is half way to Kábul"), and handed me a handful of dried grapes, saying, "Be khured" ("Eat them"). I eat the grapes, thinking that the offer of a cup of tea would have been more acceptable.

"Please tell me, Kemnáb Sahib," said I to him, through, of course, an interpreter, a rôle which the General willingly took upon himself, "does asafœtida grow here?" The Debír did not understand the question, and could not tell what asafœtida was. However, after further explanations, he joyfully exclaimed, "Ink!" Ink!" It appeared that asafœtida is known to the Afgháns by the name of "ink." After this the Debír informed us that asafœtida actually grew in these parts and that the sap of this plant was much collected. He promised to point out the plant to me, if we came across it on the road.

We then had to go for 6 versts (4 miles) over a mountain plateau, which was slightly hilly. The southern edge of the plateau ends in a descent to the Saigán Valley. This descent is also steep, and perhaps even steeper than the ascent to the Dandán-Shikan, but it is by no means so slippery; it is considerably shorter, and the ground is much softer.

Thus the Kahmard and Saigán Valleys are not divided by two passes, as is shown on the English maps (for instance, Walker and Burslem), but by one alone, which is like a broad mountain plateau. The Dandán Shikan is consequently merely the ascent to the pass, and the Saigán Pass of English authors is actually the descent from the pass. The pass itself ought to be called Dasht-i-Hashák,* the name given by the natives to the plateau.

On descending from the Saigán descent we rode for an hour almost due south, with a slight inclination west, through a defile. But now the silent defile ended, and we rode out into the valley of Saigán, which was rather narrow at this point. It extends from west to east, and is as carefully cultivated as the preceding valley. Groups of green trees again appeared in different places. The wheat here was not yet reaped, and luxurious fields extended along both banks of a copious limpid stream. Part of the Afghán escort crossed by a ford to the other side of the stream, and, in no way restrained by the fact that they trod down a beautiful corn-field, had a race, disputing one with the other as to the speed of their hill ponies.

In a few minutes' ride we approached the part of the valley where it is contracted and had only a breadth of 200 sajénes (466 yards). Here the remains of walls were seen which had at one time barred the valley; at the extremities of these walls were seen the ruins of the forts, or towers, so constantly met with here. Near the northern fort were a number of caves, hollowed out of the rocks.

Cour the French adventurist who was in the service of Runjít Sing refers these ruins to the "Alexandria Sub Caucasa" built by Alexander of Macedon.† How true his supposition is may be judged from the fact that Cour never himself saw these ruins but only heard of them.

* Probably Dasht-i-Kháshák, or "Wilderness of rubbish or débris."—*Translator.*

† Journal Asiatique, Vol. IV, pp. 376-7 (1837).

We passed these ruins and moved forward along and down the course of the brook. The valley soon widens to 2 or 3 versts across, and its western end is lost to view, losing itself in the zig-zags of the mountains surrounding it. The brook changed into a stream, 35 feet wide and 3 or 4 feet deep. We then passed a village, then another, extending, with its gardens, for a mile. In this our halting-ground was fixed. This was not the actual village of Saigán, however; that was to the east of our camp. I did not see an asafœtida plant along the road, but I wished at any cost to obtain a root of it, and, if possible, a whole plant, stem and all. I consequently asked the General's permission to go into the hills after breakfast and look for this plant, which interested me so much. The commander of the Mission replied, however, that near our halting-ground there was none of this plant, and consequently refused my request. Sardár Lál Muhammad Khán, seeing my great desire to obtain "ink," sent his Hazáras into the hills, enjoining them to find and bring me the desired root without fail.

Our tents were again pitched to-day in a shady fruit garden. For breakfast we were here given for the first time cucumbers of enormous size; they were of a spiral, twisted shape, rather over half an arshin ($1\frac{1}{6}$ feet) long, and about 2 or 3 inches in diameter. But if one could boast of their size there was nothing to be said in favour of their taste; they were completely wanting in flavour.

After dinner they brought me one specimen of asafœtida; they brought the whole plant, root and stem. The stem was then quite dry. A strong, unbearable odour was immediately perceived on approaching this root. The stem is about 3 to 4 feet high, and the leaves have a palmated shape, like our umbelliferous plants (for instance, the common ling-wort).*

To-day, however, five Cossacks again got fever, but there could be no question even as to the presence of feverish miasma here; it was so high and cold. These cases of sickness must therefore be attributed to relapses.

From Saigán w estarted at 5 A.M. with a temperature of 50° F., which was a low one for the month of July.

For some time we rode east along the Saigán stream, crossed to the right bank by a stone bridge, and opposite the village of Saigán entered a defile running in a southern direction. Before entering it we had to cross by a ford the swift but shallow brook flowing through it. Further south the defile expands and gives room for poor fields, extending in a narrow belt, now on one side, now on the other of the brook.

Here I saw beans alongside of wheat and barley. In some places, heaven knows what for, the defile is barred by transverse low earthen ramparts, over which twine various creepers. To the right and left glimmers a thin stream of water, rapidly flowing in the stony bed of an irrigation canal. All around there is not a single tree, and above is the dark-blue sky framed in by the sharp-pointed fantastic peaks and mountain tops hemming in the defile. The rocks here present the most variegated variety of outline. We often now had to travel in the bed of the brook; the fields ended; the rocks hemmed us in more closely; under

* Description in detail of asafœtida follows, of no interest except to the botanist.—*Translator.*

our feet was a mass of stones and débris. Amongst it could be perceived crystalline pebbles of a red, grey, and rosy colour.

But the defile again opens out and fields again occupy the open space, here sown chiefly with beans. In the middle of a small hollow is seen the inevitable mud fort or tower. Not far from it are two willows, the only representative of tree vegetation here. This village is called Chinár-i-Súkhta (the burnt chinár). The name of this village interested me, for I never imagined that chinárs grew at such a height (about 8,000 feet). I consequently addressed the Bámián Governor to obtain an explanation of this strange name, but he was unable to give me any. The Debír, however, told me that he had never heard of chinárs growing here, but that there was the name. Here we had a short rest, and the Debír showed himself more intelligent than the day before. He at once set about making tea, and we each drank a cup of the grateful beverage with that true enjoyment only known to travellers. To the tea were added Afghán milk-cakes, cooked with aniseed. After this the second half of the day's march was as similar to the first as two drops of water.

Mossin Khán, Mír Bába, and some other Afgháns several times put their horses into a gallop at those places where the defile changed into a turf-clad hollow. Now, however, the hills bordering the defile gradually began to assume a softer outline. Here and there even a tent-shaped sandy summit appeared. Soon cones and semi-oval hills completely replaced the former peaks and ridges; gentle slopes the steep bluffs and varied rock masses.

The beautiful green grass rose higher and higher up the hill sides. Finally, we issued out on an extensive green glade. This is Regi-nau; not a village and not a fort, but simply a locality.* Why it is called the "Nine Sands" Allah alone probably knows. It is true that the hills surrounding the glade are sandy, but all the same; there are not nine of them in the first place, and, in the second place, although they form a contrast to the green glade, they in no way diminish, so to speak, its luxuriousness; with regard to this latter I have already said more than enough. There are many springs under the soil, and consequently the whole meadow is saturated with water, like a sponge. Our tents were pitched on the surface of this sponge, and it seemed to me that the ground under the tents was unsuitably chosen. I consequently advised that, in order to avoid injurious results, the tents should be moved nearer the hills to a drier spot. However, the commandant of the Mission did not consider it advisable to carry out my suggestion.

Lál Muhammad Khán with his detachment had their camp on the other side of the brook at a considerable distance from us. Upon him fell the task of receiving the Mission and providing for its wants during the whole time it remained within his government. He was consequently constantly engaged with the suppliers of various kinds of produce and supplies; his secretary was always writing out the various receipts which were given to the suppliers; these receipts were afterwards calculated in levying the taxes.

Our camp now presented a picturesque picture, extending far and wide over the green mountain hollow. The picturesque and even fan-

* Masson says that there is a village close to this spot. Various Journeys, Volume II, page 405. But I noticed no village in the neighbourhood of our camp.

tastic character of the picture was increased, more especially when the white evening mist commenced to thicken in the hollows and ravines, when in different places the wood fires glimmered forth, lighting up with their flickering, fantastic light, the groups of sharp-pointed tents and the men passing to and fro, whilst on the summits of the softly-outlined hills the soft shimmer of the evening glow still played.

It seemed as if we were in the magical world of fairy tales. But stern reality was not long in breaking my enchantment. The exclamations of the Afghán sentinels are now heard, their challenging cries and the answers to them. Mossin Khán had commenced to go round his posts. Soon the exclamations was heard close to our tents. The barrels of the rifles flashed in the air, lighted up by the red gleams from the wood-fire as the soldiers did their sentry-go. Then Mossin Khán came in to our tent with an air of importance. The Cossacks, as had become the rule, struck their tents and lay down round the tents of the Mission on the damp and cold meadow, spreading under them ragged felts and putting on their greatcoats. Poor wretches! how did they pass the night, especially towards morning? for at 5 A.M. the thermometer was only 45·7° F.

The usual trumpet sound awoke us the next morning very early. The gloom of night still reigned in the gorge, the stars were still at their zenith, and, according to my calculation, it still wanted several hours to dawn. I could not fix the time more accurately as my watch had somehow stopped. The Cossacks rose covered with damp and dew, shivering with the cold. The General also got up.

"What is this? Mossin Khán, it seems, has lost his senses!" said he angrily. "It is only just 2 o'clock. Tell me, please, how we can march in this darkness? We shall break our horses' legs and perhaps our own necks. This won't do. Our respected 'Major' has been too zealous!"

Then followed the order to lie down again and sleep, to unload the baggage animals which the drivers had already commenced to load up, and to wait for dawn. In the meantime the roll of the drum already sounded from the Afghán camp—a sign that their movement had commenced.

Mossin Khán soon appeared and was astonished when he saw that with us nothing was ready to move off. He must have been still more surprised on this occasion, for the General for the first time since leaving the Amú-Darya read him a lecture.

Mossin Khán excused and justified himself by saying that a very long and difficult march was before us on this day.

"Panj sang ráh ast, bisyár kotal dárad,"* repeated he in confusion.

It was decided, however, to wait for dawn. The topographer, whom I had taken the precaution to awake at the trumpet sound, soon began to complain of the great cold, and immediately afterwards had a regular feverish shivering attack. The temperature under his armpit went up to 103° F. The shroud of fog, slightly wafted by the air, slowly rose and dispersed, and the first rays of sunshine were reddening the hill tops when we started. The "Naturalist" was in great grief because he could not lay down the route owing to his sickness. So I, the Colonel, Zaman Beg, and Malevinski divided amongst us the work of doing so; one ascertained the names of the localities and villages, another observed the angles with the compass, a third calculated the time of the march, &c.

* Five "sang" road (*i.e.*, 40 versts = 26⅔ miles), and there are many passes.

Soon, however, I too had to give up my share of the duty of sketching the route, for the fever paid me a visit also; but I was well pleased that its visit on this occasion was a very mild one. Immediately afterwards the apothecary told me that four Cossacks were sick. On seeing them I found that they also had fever. There is no doubt that camping the night before on the marshy ground was the cause of these cases of sickness, all the more so that the Cossacks were without tents for the night. One was again led to doubt the direct exhalation of miasmic poison, for the actual height of the locality was as much as 9,000 feet, and the temperature by day not more than 71·6° F. in the morning and at night a good deal less. It was evident that I had to do with the residues of fever, which had been produced exclusively by the unfavourable and even directly injurious situation in which we had had the misfortune to find ourselves. With regard to the Cossacks, it was surprising so few of them were ill. Situated as they were, one might have expected a regular epidemic of sickness, for, *1stly*, the Cossacks had very heavy night duty, as three were detailed every night; *2ndly*, those who were not on duty were not able to rest as they should have done at night. The commander of the Mission ordered them to pack up their tents once for all, and they had to sleep in the open air, dispersed round the tent in which the Mission passed the night. It may be imagined that the damp and cold at night told most unfavourably on the health of the Cossacks. I had made representations on the subject to the commander of the Mission and advised that the Cossacks should not be deprived of their tents at night, but it was considered impracticable to carry out my advice, and, thanks to this advice, I was myself accused of subverting discipline. At 5 versts (3⅓ miles) from Regi-nau the ascent commences to the Ak-Rabát Pass (the pass of the white sarai). The ascent to the pass extends for 4 versts (2⅔ miles). In places it is very steep, but everywhere well made and practicable for wheeled carriage. Now we are at the top of the last barrier separating us from the much-talked-of Bámián. What an effective picture is presented to your view from the summit of this pass!

Below, directly at your feet, extends a narrow green valley, sown with varied vegetation. In the middle of this valley is—you must already guess what—the inevitable fort. Beyond again is the road winding snake-like through the valley, and dividing into two branches: one turns to the left, crosses a brook flowing from the southern foot-slope of the Ak-Rabát peak, and commences again to mount one of the spurs of the Ak-Rabát range of hills, the Pelu (?) Pass; the other branch of the road turns to the right and steeply ascends a hill. The first runs to Bámián, the second to Herat, as the loquacious Lál Muhammad Khán informed me.*

Further to the south the little valley is hemmed in by a whole sea of surrounding hills with very gentle outlines, covered with beautiful pastures. A haze covered these hills, amongst which I could perceive two or three "forts." Lál Muhammad Khán informed me that this was a village of the Hazáras. The hills are immediately contiguous to the gigantic chain of the Kúh-i-Bábá, the sharp peaks and ridges of which are covered for several thousand feet with eternal snow. This uninterrupted

* Probably this is the road travelled in 1506 (?) by Sultán Báber from Herat to Bámián and thence to Kábul. He has been, it appears, the only leader who, up to the present time, has traversed the whole Hazáraját with troops in winter.

mountain chain has a direction east-north-east and west-south-west. Its eastern end is at Giljatui, and the western loses itself in the misty distance. In this range a massive group, called Shaitan, rises considerably above the general level of the mountains, effectively throwing out its three dazzlingly white summits against the clear blue ground of the sky.

I looked back and was struck with the contrast presented to my view. The green, smiling valley, which we had just left, appeared a desert, and beyond it an impenetrable fog concealed from us the gloomy rocks of the mountain barrier of the "Dasht-i-Kháshák." At the fort of Ak-Rabát the Debír again treated us to tea and cakes. I have in fact nothing to say against his making this practice a constant habit.

The barley in this valley at this time was hardly in ear. The height of the Ak-Rabát Pass is variously fixed by English travellers. Some (Wood) give the height at 11,000 feet; others (Burnes) at 9,000 feet.

We had only just accomplished the descent from the Ak-Rabát, when we again had to climb the pass of Pelu, rather short, but very steep, consisting, moreover, of rather soft soil. Beyond in a hollow, quite bare, although having empty fields, the road again divides into two branches: one runs due south in a defile, and the other more to the left, turning this defile. We went by the turning road, as the rains, which had fallen not long before our arrival, had greatly injured the road through the defile. Riding by the turning road we had again to ascend to the pass of Chashmah-i-Pelu, steep, but not high. Then for a period of two hours' ride the road extended through a very hillocky locality. I do not know how often we had not to ascend out of ravines and descend from hillocks of various height into hollows. I only know that, exhausted by fever, I was very tired. One of the sick Cossacks was in fact unable to ride; on one of the hillocks he fell off and lay on the ground like a log, without any movement. I always had a flask of cognac with me, and I poured 3 or 4 ounces of this "balsam," which was really very "healing," at once down the sick man's throat. In a few minutes colour came into the sick man's cheeks; his eyes lost their glassy glitter, and soon he was able to continue his journey, though with difficulty.

During this time the General, riding on Mossin Khán's excellent pacer, who had had the kindness to lend him his horse at the difficult places of the road, had ridden fast. Consequently he rode on far in front, and we, the remaining portion of the Mission, remained far behind, strung out in a long tail along the road. Here we are at the descent to the Bámián gorge,* now at the exit from it into the Bámián Valley. Here are situated the first group of caves; the ruins of a few houses are scattered about close alongside of them. In the walls of the ruins, made of mud, in some places there were well-preserved, little, cleanly-plastered niches. Some of these half-ruined houses and the caves adjacent to them were inhabited. In half an hour's ride from here we reached the place for our night's halt.

* Masson in the year 1832 passed by the same road by which we travelled from Ak-Rabát to the beginning of the Bámián Valley, when he went to Saigán with Háji Khán's detachment. On his return from Saigán to Bámián, he went by the Bámián defile, by the road which separated from ours between the Pelu and Chashma Pelu Passes.—Masson, "Various Journeys," Vol. II, pages 395-6 and 421-2. It is hard to determine which of these roads was followed by other English travellers, as their descriptions are not sufficiently detailed.

CHAPTER VII.

In the Bámián Valley.

Three days in Bámián—Relics of antiquity; caves; ruins—The Bámián Colossi—My journey through the caves and ascent on to the head of one of the Colossi—Description of the Colossi—Local traditions about them—The Little Irák Pass—Geography of the Bámián Valley; its *flora* and *fauna*—Short history of Bámián from the most ancient times to the present day—A few words about the position of the ancient town of Bámián.

The shade of the small poplar grove, under which our tents were sheltered, left nothing to be desired. Of course the grove did not give us its services in the light of shade owing to the high temperature of the air, for, according to Burnes, the height of this valley is over 8,000 feet, so that there could be no prospect of heat even by day. This was indeed actually confirmed. The temperature taken by me in the shade of a tent at 1 o'clock in the day on the 20th July (1st August) was 84° F.—an insignificant figure, if we remember that in Turkistán the usual daily temperature is 104° F.

No; the shade of the grove was of use to us in another respect. The close proximity of the huge snowy mass of the Kúh-i-Bábá, the low, and in places very gentle, hills bordering the valley on the south and north, caused a very strong diffusion of light here. The eye was in fact blinded by the streams of light reflected by the snowy masses of the mountains. In the valley there is no barrier to break the mass of refracted rays and to modify the power of their action. The poplar grove appeared to be the only thing in the valley to do so, and naturally the eye rested with pleasure on the soft, dull green shade of its leaves.

On riding into the grove a mud hut is found, on the top of which a whole pile of sheeps' horns are piled. We were consequently on this occasion the guest of some Musulman saint. The sanctity of the place was recognised by the fact that our horses, which were given over at the very hut, were quickly led away by the Afghán attendants to more distant places. This tomb, however, in no way interested me, even though it might be that of some celebrated saint. I was more occupied with fixing the age of the patriarch of this grove, a giant poplar. Judging by the diameter, one must put it down at 300 years old, and this was confirmed by the Debír and Lál Muhammad Khán. One of the best traits of the Central Asian Musulman is this respect for large old trees. These trees always remain untouched and are often considered sacred, or are the subject of some legend. In Central Asia the name of Ali is not seldom heard in connection with some tree, rock, or village, &c.; so you may imagine that this ubiquitous Ali was also present by national tradition in the Bámián Valley.*

* In the Bámián Valley (which we passed through completely, with the exception of its eastern end) is a rock called "Azhdaha" or "the Dragon" which was killed here by Ali. Burnes relates a tradition communicated to him by Leech of the tasks or labours of Ali which took place here on the Bámián Valley. The tradition is that the Musulman hero, like

There is no doubt that Ali could not have been here, but national legends do not stick at adapting any prominent place to their cherished hero.

However that may be, it is probable that the respect and love for old trees by the natives is caused by these legends and *vice versâ*. In the present case the legend had done good service; a gigantic tree had remained untouched and had succeeded in producing around it a young generation of soft-leaved, well-shaped poplars, the shade of which we were now very glad of.

Little by little all the remaining people reached the tents,—the topographer very tired and looking sleepy. No sooner had the four Cossacks crawled to the tents, then they threw themselves down on the ground like logs. The unwearying and never dispirited Malevinski was now occupied in a very serious business. Taking advantage of the panic caused amongst us owing to so many persons having sickened with fever at once, he was persuading the General to open his cellar.

As a matter of fact, the use of alcoholic drinks to a small extent on such a difficult route was really necessary. Now Malevinski being in charge of the wine cases was much exercised in his mind. He had to choose between English bitter beer and sherry. He settled the difficulty by putting out both, adding to them a bottle of yellow chartreuse. On this day we thus had a considerable change in our usual run of beverages. Even the Cossacks were deemed worthy by the General's order of tasting the sweet liquor in a spoon.

The proximity of the remarkable relics of antiquity of this elevated valley,—the fragmentary statements about these mementos which the Debír at once communicated to us,—the historical recollections of the Bámián which had existed not long before,—all brought about a lively and lengthy conversation amongst the handful of Russians whom the caprice of fate had thrown into these countries, about which, before this, scarcely one of them had dreamt.

In this lively conversation the honoured names of some English travellers who had visited Bámián were occasionally heard Moorcroft, Burnes, and Masson were pictured to the imagination as if alive.

Some of us much wished to visit all the local places worthy of notice,—Gul-Guléh, the ruins of which were seen to the south-east of our tents; the celebrated Colossi of Bámián; to explore the caves cut out of the rocks, of the extent of which Burnes gives such a hyperbolic account, &c.*

Upon this the General stated that there would be a day's halt at Bámián, and that the next day we would see and visit all the places of interest.

Hercules of old, was obliged to serve the local king for a certain time. This king was called Berber, and his capital was situated in the Bámián Valley. Ali had to perform the two following tasks:—

(1) To construct a dam on the river, upon which 1,000 slaves had laboured long and unsuccessfully before him. (In Persian 1,000 is "hazár," but the labourers employed in constructing the dam were also called "Hazáras.") Ali successfully accomplished this task by cutting off with his sword (which according to tradition was 490 feet in length) a piece of the cliff hanging over the river.

(2) With the same sword he killed the terrible dragon, which devastated the neighbourhood of the king's town.—(*Kábul, page 326.*)

* The natives told Burnes that a mother once lost her child in these caves; he went astray and wandered about in them for 12 years, after which he again saw the light.—(Burnes' *Travels in Bokhára*, Vol. II, p. 269.)

On this night the Cossacks were not deprived of their tents.

The following day, *i.e.*, 21st July (2nd August), was a holiday for us, —that is, a halt. It really was time to give both the men and animals rest. Many of our horses had bruised their feet; nearly all the baggage animals had rubbed their backs and were generally very thin. The condition of their hoofs necessitated the most serious attention. The continued shoeing, which had been caused by the frequent loss of shoes owing to the stony mountain road to which our steppe horses were unaccustomed, had greatly impaired the soundness of the horn of their hoofs.

The hoofs of some of the horses, notwithstanding the application of ointment and grease, had become quite unfit for further shoeing; the horn would no longer hold the nails. We now envied our Afghán fellow-travellers all the more their horses of the native hill breed—horses which do not know what shoes are, and do not require them. Their hoofs are harder than iron. *À priori* one would have supposed that their hoofs unprotected by shoes would quickly wear away, that it would become thin and only leave a thin layer of horn, but as a matter of fact the opposite is the case. The hoof of the native mountain horses was provided with a thick layer of elastic horn.

However, we again had to shoe our steppe horses, as without shoes they could not have continued their journey at all. For this purpose a native blacksmith was called up. When he heard that he had to shoe 15 horses, he said that he had not got a sufficient quantity of iron for such a large number. The matter required the intervention of the local Governor, and the horses were with some trouble shod.

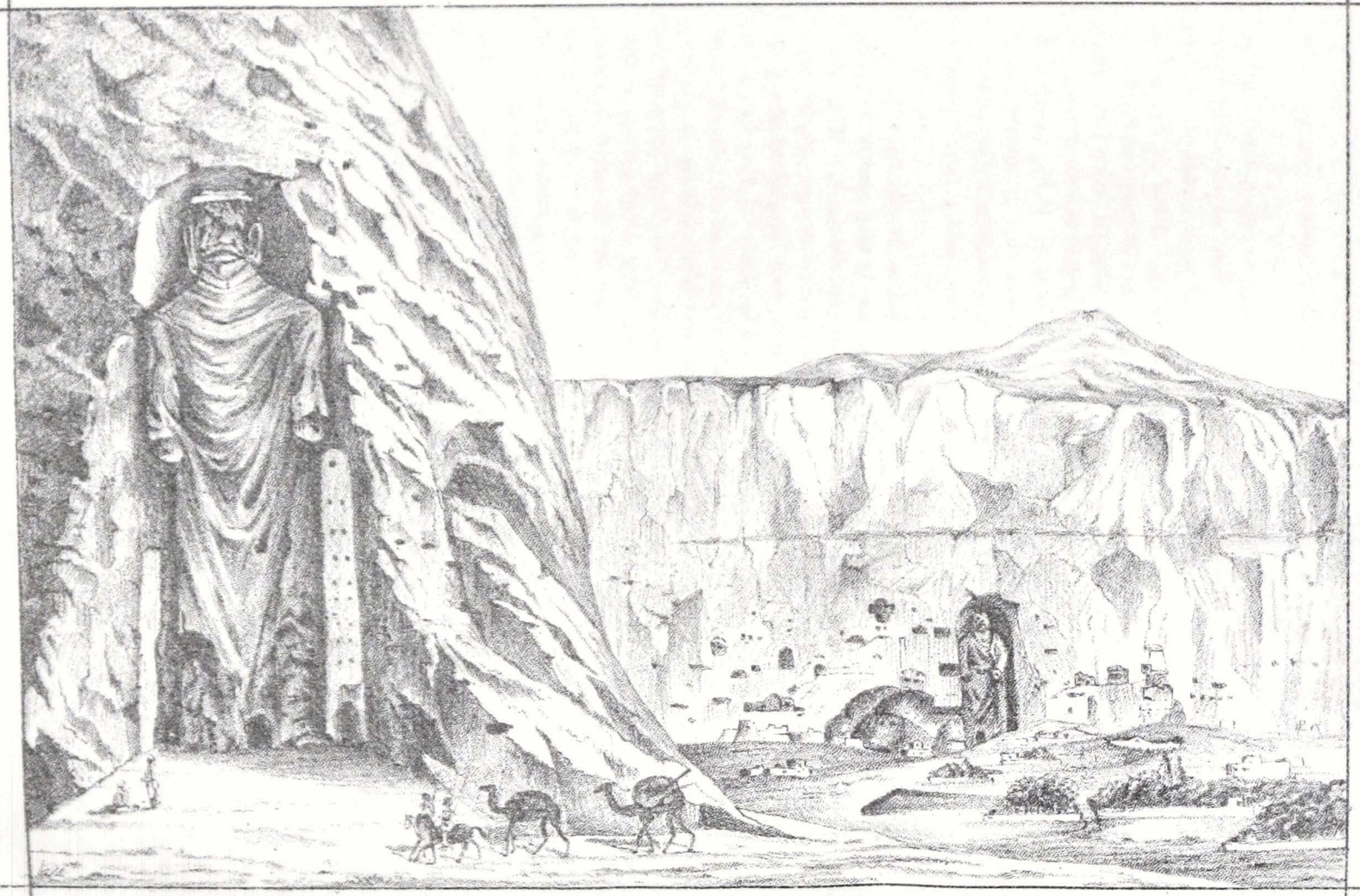
Dinner time passed, and we all expected an invitation to come from the General to mount our horses and go and see the celebrated valley. But one hour passes, a second passes, and the desired invitation does not come.

However, the agreement was that the Debír and Lál Muhammad Khán should come for us, and that then we should all start together; but there was no sign of either the one or the other.

As their tents were not far from ours, the General, accompanied by Mossin Khán, went to the Debír. There he spent a good two hours. When finally he returned, he stated that we could not make a tour of inspection in the valley, but that to-morrow we should ride past the Colossi and see them on our way. The General, however, promised that we should inspect everything minutely on our return journey. In the meantime there were the original walls and towers of the ruins of Gul-Guléh, rising to the south-east of us on a high detached hill, and an endless series of caves, whetting my curiosity. Instead of the expedition, the General proposed to inspect through the glass the ascent to the Kálú Pass, which could be clearly seen from here on the gigantic crest of a mountain ridge bordering the valley on the south-east.

The whitish snake-like path could be well distinguished through the binoculars. The General informed us that we should not ascend by this pass, but by another which turned it, the Irák Pass. Thus we passed the whole day in inaction, quietly, and not at all in holiday fashion.

22nd July (3rd August). Again on the road! Caves again extended on our left, piled in some places one over the other in several storeys; within them could be sometimes seen the swarthy face of its timid resident, who in his curiosity did not dare to show himself outside his



BAMIAN IDOLS

door-window. Sometimes on the third storey of the caves on a gallery stores of forage were seen, chiefly clover. On the right, fields descended right down to the Bámián stream, which noisily rolled along its muddy waters; occasionally fortlets, the original type of native villages, were seen along its banks.

We pass two or three poor gardens, in which almost the only representatives of trees were the poplar and wild apple. The rocks extending along on our left hand became gradually higher and higher. The storeys of caves amounted to five. We made a slight turn to the left, and a remarkable spectacle met our gaze. Right in front of us rose a huge Colossus,—the Bámián idol. I do not think that I was the only one seized by a strange sensation at seeing this gigantic memorial of antiquity. Many centuries had passed over the head of this giant, and he still stands immovable as before. Both men and the elements have done their work of destruction, but neither earthquakes nor the cannon shots of fanatical Musulmans have destroyed this giant; their united efforts have only slightly mutilated it.

I will endeavour to describe it in as much detail as possible.

In a perpendicular cliff 200 feet high, a niche is cut about 70 feet wide; its depth in the rock averages about 35 to 49 feet. The cliff consists of conglomerate. Within the niche is a Colossus about 140 feet high. Three faces of the Colossus are open, *viz.*, the front and the two sides; the back is coincident with the rock. The face of the Colossus is carved to the lower lip; the ears are preserved; round the neck runs a brick barrier like a gallery. The breast of the idol is broad and flat. The hands to the elbow are pressed to the side, beyond they are broken off. The legs below the knee are mutilated, according to the statements of the Afgháns, by cannon-shots. The idol is dressed in a cloak made of plaster; the cloak is very well preserved in its upper part; in places where the plaster has stripped off, holes can be seen as if nails had been placed there to strengthen the plaster. The walls of the niche are also covered with plaster, generally well preserved. The vaulted upper part of the niche, *i.e.*, the part above the head of the Colossus, is covered with frescoes, representing groups of people and separate figures. The figures are of two types, full length and half length. The full-length figures represent men; the half-length, women.

The faces, especially of the half-length figures, are made very delicate, *i.e.*, the outlines of the face are very delicate and fine, but there is little life-like about them. In the style of their delineation they remind one strongly of a Chinese painting or rather of a Byzantine church-painting. The hair on the heads of the half-length figures is combed back to the nape of the neck and collected in a knot. Over some of the figures there is something in the form of an aureole. It is necessary, however, to remark that the paintings, although they present a striking freshness of colour, do not form a complete picture; very few complete figures remain.

Between the feet of the Colossus is the entrance to an extensive cave, the soot-covered vaulted roof of which bears witness that it was once inhabited. But extensive though it is, it cannot contain half a regiment as Burnes states.* In the walls of the niche at varying heights

* Burnes' *Travels in Bokhára*, Vol. II, page 269.

are pierced arched windows. At these places, so they told me, a staircase winds up which reaches to the head of the Colossus. I expressed a wish to ascend to the head of the Colossus, but had to refrain from carrying out my wish; the staircase was fallen in and it was quite impossible to ascend it. I was much distressed at this news. What! to be at the foot of these most mighty relics of antiquity, and not to be able to ascend where no European had ever been! This was indeed an unbearable punishment for a tourist! I did not at all wish to ascend to the top of the Colossus in order to scratch my name upon a stone as tourists in general and Englishmen in particular delight in doing. No; I simply wished to experience some new sensations, the equal of which it would be hard to find. What, for instance, would the ascent to the bell of Cologne Cathedral or to the dome of St. Peter's at Rome be before this ascent; or even Vesuvius itself! Such *tours de force* could be carried out as often and whenever you wished! Here, on the contrary, was this one chance, which might never be repeated in my life. I consequently expressed a wish to attempt the ascent even by the ruined staircase, trusting to the all-powerful Russian "good luck." However, I was not allowed to attempt it, but I was gladdened by the intelligence that one could ascend another Colossus 600 or 700 yards to the east, as the staircase there was preserved intact. We now again mounted our horses and went on to the next idol. We had to pass two or three niches, also cut out of the rock, of considerably smaller proportions than the one we had just inspected. Two of them were empty (in one there was only part of a head), and in the third was a rather well preserved small idol. Soon after this we reached the second large Colossus. It was rather smaller than the first, just described by me, but resembled it very much in everything. The face was also mutilated, the arms broken off at the elbow, but the legs were whole. There was no stone barrier round the neck. Its height was about 120 feet.

I had now to ascend to the head of the Colossus. Upon this Mossin Khán obligingly warned me not to stand upon the head of the Colossus, "because," he said, "it had gone ill with all those who had done so, and some inconceivable horror had overtaken them. Some men had fallen down and been bruised to death." The Bámián Governor selected the Afghán who knew most about the caves and the way up to the idol's head, and I started with N. O. Razgonov, accompanied by our cicerone. First we went a few score yards to the right of the niche, entered one of the caves, and ascended to the second storey by a staircase cut in the rock, and came out in a gallery looking out on the valley. Going along it we again entered the caves, which were here square in shape with dome-shaped roofs. The caves bore traces of being inhabited by man; there were various household requisites, forage, &c., about, but we saw no people. Then we ascended into the gallery of the third storey by a narrow passage having the appearance of a staircase with broken-down steps. Here we had an extensive bird's-eye view over the Bámián Valley.

Below at our very feet stood the group of the Mission, beyond were seen fields, and beyond the belt of fields glimmered the swift-flowing Bámián river; beyond the river, on a detached, rather high hill, were seen the ruins of an ancient town, now called Gul-Guléh. Finally, the horizon was bounded by the grey giants of the Kúh-i-Bábá crowned with eternal

snow. Some narrow valleys, watered by turbid streams, descended the sides of the gigantic mountains.

We then again began to mount upwards. The staircase now led us along the left side of the niche, into which several windows opened. The staircase was much broken down; in some places the steps were quite worn away, and it presented a steep, slippery slope. One false step, and you might slide down, perhaps fall through the windows into the niche. The staircase is spiral. The desire to get to the top was so strong within me that preceding the guide I quickly distanced N. O. Razgonov, and it was only his cries of "Doctor, why are you in such a hurry?—wait a bit," resounding from below, which made me for a time restrain my rapid steps. In some places one had literally to clamber up on all-fours, it was so slippery and steep. Finally, we reached the end of the staircase. It came out in a spacious room. The cornices of this room were covered with a rude frieze. A thick layer of soot covered the roof and walls. This soot prevents one seeing picturesque paintings apparently the same as on the walls of the niche. In places these figures are gashed by sword-cuts. Through the door of this room we passed into a gallery, running behind the head of the Colossus. A small window opening from the gallery direct on to the head allowed us to issue forth on to its surface.

The surface of the head was an oval area with a diameter of 10½ feet. The back of the Colossus' head is joined to the back wall of the niche. A painful feeling came over me when I went to the edge of the space and looked down. Under me and far below, the small figures of men were visible. Some of them tried to throw a small stone up to us, but without success. The voices of people, however, standing below retained their power well; even a whisper reached us with exactness. It was a most convenient place here to inspect the paintings of the figures over the head of the Colossus, but unfortunately the frescoes were worse preserved in this niche than in the first; sword-cuts and traces of bullets marked them in all directions. In a few minutes we were down again. I wished to descend from the Colossus by another staircase, but received an answer from our cicerone that it was much destroyed, and that it was impossible to go down by it. He himself did not get on to the head, and stood the whole time in the upper gallery behind the head. To my query why he did not come up on to the head, he replied that "the devil sometimes treats badly those who dare to stand on the head of Sháh-Máma." "Here have we been examining the idols also," said the General, when the Colonel and I descended to the Mission group, who were seated on the stones waiting for us.

The ruins of the ancient city of Gul-Guléh, however, remained unexamined, but still, I think, it will not be out of place if I give a description here of the ruins as they appeared to me from a distance.

The ruins of Gul-Guléh are on the south side of the valley, 1 verst or at the most 1½ versts (1 mile) from the great Colossus. They are almost opposite the group of Colossi, but a little inclined to the south-west and occupy a detached hill, rather high, surrounded with the remains of walls. Of these walls the corner towers have been best preserved. One could notice that the walls surrounded the hill in several tiers, rising, as it were, in storeys, one over the other. On the summit of the hill were seen ruined buildings. This summit is the surface of a truncated pyramid, and,

measured by eye, occupies an area of ½ verst square (142 acres). On the western side the hill ends in a steep precipice, above which the houses are apparently best preserved. Below, under the precipice, in a narrow valley situated in the bed of a mountain brook, the remains of buildings are also seen. The southern boundary of the hill, in the direction of the snowy Kúh-i-Bábá range, was invisible even from the height of the Colossus to the top of which I ascended. Scarcely any, more or less trustworthy, traditions have been preserved amongst the local population or amongst the Afgháns about these Colossi and Gul-Guléh. They think that the Colossi represent a king and his wife, and call the big Colossus "Síl-Sál," and the smaller one, his wife, "Sháh-Máma." They also suppose that this royal pair lived in the most remote antiquity. That this interpretation and supposition is not worthy of the very least criticism is shown by the fact that the Colossi have exactly the same appearance, and the smaller one is not a bit like a woman; its breast is perfectly flat.

Of Gul-Guléh they say that it was a very large town, populous and rich, and that it existed from a very remote period and was destroyed by Chengiz Khán, who obtained possession of it by treachery.

As the city was provided with subterranean water-channels, it might have successfully withstood the siege of Chengiz Khán. Direct attacks on a town surrounded by a tripal wall must have terminated unsuccessfully for the attackers. The affair ended, however, in the destruction of the town, and this is how it was accomplished.

The daughter of the king of the town was in love with one of the sons of Chengiz; in a transport of love she revealed to him the secret of the water-channels, praying him, however, to keep the secret.

Nevertheless Chengiz succeeded in finding out this secret, promising his son to spare the town. But no sooner had the water-courses been broken, and the town, owing to want of water, had been forced to surrender, than, enraged by their long and stubborn resistance, he razed it to the ground and utterly destroyed all the inhabitants; children at the breasts of their mothers were not even spared. This is all that national tradition tells us about these ruins. The name itself, Gul-Guléh, meaning noise, outcry, was given to the ruins of this town, because before its destruction it was very populous and boiling over with activity.

We then continued our journey eastwards, or rather east-north-east, still along the left bank of the Bámián stream at the very foot of the precipitous rocks.

Huge rocks sometimes completely barred our way; it was then necessary to go round them by zig-zags. Soon the caves ended, the valley gradually became narrower, the fields smaller, and in a few versts we entered the rather wide gorge or defile of "Ahangar," shut in on the south side by a lofty, vertical, rocky wall of indurated earth, whilst the northern side of the defile was still conglomerate. The defile extends for a verst, and then gradually opens out into the valley of Topchi, where the ground is again occupied by fields, sown with wheat, beans, oats, and other crops, and replacing the stones up to the very foot of the cliffs. Here also is the "fort" of Topchi, and at a little distance from it glisten the ready-pitched tents of our camp.

The sick Cossacks were rather better to-day; the topographer also felt himself well, and the day passed in a lively manner. After dinner a toast

was proposed by the General Stolietov to the health of the Queen Empress, as this was the anniversary of her birth.

* * * * * *

On the following day we left our camping ground early, as usual, and continued our journey still further east. Having gone 6 versts (4 miles), we came to some well-preserved ruins, the site of the city of Zohák.* Here we crossed the Bámián river by a ford; it is here about 70 yards wide and 2 to 4 feet deep. Its current is very swift; the bed of the stream is strewn with large and small stones; the water is very turbid, and of a brown colour. It was very difficult for the baggage animals to cross the river, especially the bullocks. Some of the loads were wet through. We issued from the river right under the cliff upon which Zohák's town is perched. This cliff is perpendicular, both on the east side and on the north towards the Bámián river. On the east side it is washed by the Kálú stream flowing through the narrow Kálú valley, and falling into the Bámián river under Zohák's cliff. The Kálú stream is about 35 yards wide, 3 feet deep, and at this point has a very rapid and impetuous current.

If we had been going by the Kálú Pass, we should have had to keep due south by the left bank of the Kálú stream, under Zohák's cliff; our route, however, lay by the Irák Pass; we consequently crossed the Kálú stream by a ford and again struck east. On ascending to the opposite and rather high bank of the stream we had to halt a little, as it was a work of no small difficulty and time getting the baggage animals across two swift mountain streams. Taking advantage of this halt, we again looked at the ruins of Zohák's town from a distance. I now asked permission to climb up on to the cliff, but it was refused.

These ruins present two detached parts; one part on the summit of the cliff presents a mass of crowded buildings, amongst which may be discerned two or three well-preserved small mud (apparently) cupolas. The lower part of the ruins is quite close up to the eastern bluff of the cliff, and on the side of the Kálú stream is fenced in by a wall, built of stones, laid in mortar, and having a height of about 21 feet. This wall is generally very well preserved and provided with several towers. The Afgháns accompanying us said that from this part of the ruins there is a way or passage to the upper part cut out of the rock, and pointed out as part of it a kind of projection in the cliff like a balcony, with a fragment of wall upon it.

The legend told about this town and its founder, the King Zohák, is as follows: Zohák was a powerful hero, wicked, inhuman, harsh. A snake used to be placed on each of his shoulders. These snakes were fed on human brains, and two men were killed every day to feed them. The whole neighbouring country groaned under this tyranny. At last Heaven had compassion on them. The pious Persian King Faridun penetrated here through the Ahangar defile and killed the tyrant.†

We now for some time marched over an elevated plateau and then descended into a deep ravine, running in a direction from north-west to south-east, and opening in all probability into the valley of the Bámián river. This ravine is dry, but in spring and in the rainy season a mountain

* See Burnes, p. 157, Vol. II.—*Translator.*

† Burslem in his book also quotes a very interesting tradition about Zohák, although of a different kind. According to his tradition, Zohák was simply a robber of the Hazára tribe who lived in the time before Nádir Sháh's invasion of Afghánistán.—Burslem—"A Peep into Turkistán," pp. 202-8.

torrent probably rushes through it, which is proved by the mass of fine shingle strewing the bottom of the ravine. Here there is no caravan road. We still kept south-east up the ravine, and in half an hour's ride reached the foot of the Little Irák Pass. The ascent to it is pretty good and runs in zig-zags along the sides of the mountain.

At the very summit the road runs along a cornice over a precipice several score feet high. From the height of this pass, the actual elevation of which is 9,000 feet according to Griffiths, an extensive view opens out to the north into the Bámián Valley; the site of Zohák's city is seen from here as if in the palm of one's hand, also the summit of the Ak-Rabát Pass, and to the east the continuous mass of the snowy mountains of the Hindu Kúsh. The southern horizon is closed by the peak of the Irák Pass, along the northern side of which runs the path by which we went. The descent from the Little Pass at once brought us to an elevated and rather wide mountain plateau; along this we marched for three quarters of an hour, still in an easterly direction. Even at this elevation the grass was burnt up by the sun, but above this plateau, nearer to the remains of the melting snow crowning the neighbouring peaks, the side of the hills were an emerald green and covered with tender and succulent grass. On its eastern side the plateau falls precipitously. By a steep descent from it we reached the Irák Valley, where our camp was established.

Let us now glance at the valley just left behind us, looking into its present state and its past. The Bámián Valley is a long narrow belt of fertile land which extends along the Bámián stream. The main direction of the valley is from west to east, although it bends round (especially at its eastern end) a little to the north-east. Commencing at the Bámián defile, the top of which is at the foot of the Ak-Rabát Pass and ends at the first group of caves, the valley runs up to the Ahangar gorge, and throughout its extent is almost equally broad, or rather narrow, for its breadth nowhere exceed 2 versts (1⅓ miles).

In length it extends 20 versts (13⅓ miles). On both sides this lofty valley is bounded by precipitous and sometimes perpendicular cliffs. The northern boundary is like a continuous rampart, occasionally broken by small ravines in which flow streams falling into the Bámián river. The cliffs on the northern side are wilder and more gloomy than those on the southern border of the valley. Further to the north they continue to the Ak-Rabát range of hills, forming a slightly undulating (hilly) mountain plateau. The southern side does not present so much uniformity; its rocky mountain barrier, with its varied tints of all colours of the rainbow, presents wide gaps in many places, covered with a green carpet of fields. Considerable streams usually flow out of these gaps, sometimes having highly coloured waters. Thus, for instance, in the Surkh-dara defile, running in the direction of the meridian and not far from the Ahangar defile, the water of the stream is of a deep-red colour, and for a long time it runs in the common bed in a separate belt without mingling with the water of the Bámián river.* The southern precipitous edge of the valley merges into the advanced spurs of the Kúh-i-Bábá, which are of a gently undulating character; without changing their outlines they extend right up to the snowy range itself.

Almost in the centre of the valley, but often nearer to its southern

* This may be often seen in the Himalayas.—*Translator.*

edge, flows the turbid and noisy Áb-i-Bámián, or Bámián river. The amount of mineral deposit which its waters carry is enormous. The source of the stream is at the western end of the valley, in the Bámián defile. The soil of the valley is formed by the disintegration of the mountain rocks from the surrounding heights; it is impossible not to notice in it the especial predominance of clay and fine shingle.

The valley is uninterruptedly covered with fields. The chief kinds of grain sown here are wheat, barley, beans, peas, and—what is especially remarkable—oats. I have purposely used the word "remarkable." Nowhere else, where I had been up to this time in Central Asia—in Afghánistán, in the dominions of Bukhára, in Russian Turkistán—had I met with fields of oats; I only now met with them for the first time here.

Large fields of peas and beans also attracted my attention. I may also remark that, on the whole road through the Hindu Kúsh, from the River Amú up to the village of Súkhta-Chinár, we did not meet with peas or beans anywhere. The wheat at this time (22nd June = 4th July) was only just in ear, and the barley was almost quite ripe; the same may be said of the oats. This latter crop is cultivated here in a strange manner; (1) they cut it without allowing it to come fully into ear; (2) the grain is not thrashed out, and they do not usually separate it from the straw, but give their cattle the oat crop as fodder like common grass.* Clover (lucerne) is also sown here.

There are few representatives of tree vegetation here: poplar, willow, wild apple, and that is all. I did not notice any acerose-leafed trees. Tree vegetation is a weak point here; you occasionally see small groups of what one is pleased to call trees, unadapted to the soil and climate.

Now I will pass on to the description of what does not exist here, but which many have been spoken and argued about; I mean "the town of Bámián." On all maps the town of Bámián is shown either in large or small type. This is not surprising, for it is well known that on maps they enter all information obtained from enquiries, and once some one must have been told that there was a town here, and so they show it here still. But what causes one the greatest astonishment is that the latest travellers, even such as Burnes, also speak of the town of Bámián and place it on the map. This is the most complete error. In the Bámián Valley at the present time there is not a single place which one could call a town. There are only the ruins of Gul-Guléh and Zohák's town. Everything else consists either of the villages described by me,—the "forts" of English travellers,—or else of groups of caves cut in the cliffs of the valley. In some places the caves form pretty considerable groups, as, for instance, at the western end of the valley and at the group of Colossi, but they extend generally almost throughout the whole length of the valley. By a glance at the map it appears clear to us that travellers have given the name of a town to that group of caves which lies at the entrance to the valley at its western end. Here, too, this hypothetical town is placed in the Mission's route compiled by Benderski. Thus there is no town in the Bámián Valley at the present time, and it is time to cease marking it on the maps.

The curious local villages are scattered throughout the valley; the number of them is 15.

* The same thing is done in Australia, but the crop is allowed to ripen and is then dried and chopped up.—*Translator.*

I did not succeed in obtaining the numbers of the population of the valley. The local inhabitants are chiefly Hazáras, but there are also Tájiks. The Afgháns here only form a temporary, newly arrived element, in the form of the Governor's troops, &c.

Of the animal kingdom in this valley I can say very little. The local horses are praised for their endurance; they are of small size. The horned cattle present the characteristic peculiarity of having rather strongly pronounced humps. Sheep and goats are bred here in large quantities, according to Afghán accounts. Of predatory animals I heard nothing; and I did not see a single kind of bird. The Afgháns told me that a great many trout* are caught in one of the streams falling from the south into the Bámián river, but we did not see them ourselves.

I would add that during the three days we passed in this historical valley, the thermometer at 1 P.M. in the shade did not exceed 87·8° F., and at 8 A.M. did not fall below 53·6° F.

I will now touch upon the far-distant past of this valley, and I think that the reader will pardon me this break in the continuity of my description of the journey of the Mission.

When the ancient Bactriana was spoken of above, we saw that very important traditions were associated with its soil, having for their subject the whole human race. The Bámián Valley in this respect is scarcely inferior to the classical Bactriana. Bámián itself, too, in antiquity scarcely yields the palm to Balkh. The various traditions relating to various subjects in this valley I have already given above. I will now mention those which, so to speak, lead us up to the history of the whole human race. In this case this will be the introduction to the history of Bámián.

"The natives," says Wilford, "look on Bámián and the neighbouring countries as the place of residence of the ancestors of the human race, both before and after the flood.† Buddhist traditions also point to the antiquity of Bámián, attributing its building to the Patriarch Sem.‡ Persian authors in their turn also ascribe a very ancient existence to Bámián; their traditions associated with some ruins to be found in this valley (for instance, Zohák's town) also speak to this. Mention is already made of Bámián by Zoroaster in the work "Zend Avesta."§ According to Diodorus of Sicily, Bámián existed before Ninos the King of Assyria.‖ These two latter sources of information no longer belong to the regions of tradition, but to those of history. It is necessary to remark that the historical information which we have at the present time about this valley, about the periods before Christ, is very meagre.

The histories of Alexander of Macedon, which throw such a beautiful light on the conditions of life of the countries along the Oxus and Jaxartes, say nothing about this presumed cradle of humanity—Bámián. On the basis of the meagre information furnished to us by the histories

* Burslem, page 37, also speaks of trout caught in the stream.

† On Mount Caucasus, Asiatic Researches of the Society, instituted in Bengal, Vol. VI, page 470.

‡ On Mount Caucasus, Asiatic Researches of the Society instituted in Bengal, Vol. VI, page 463.

§ Zend Avesta—Ouvrage de Zoroastre traduit par Anketil du Perron, Vol. II, page 393, Paris, 1771.

‖ On Mount Caucasus, page 470.

of Alexander on his campaigns in the Caucasus Mountains, there is no possibility of compiling a more or less accurate statement of the route taken by him through the Hindu Kúsh.

There is, however, no doubt that the Bámián Valley must have played a rôle of no small importance in the succession of small Greek kingdoms formed in Bactriana and Ariana after the fall of Alexander's monarchy. The so-called Greco-Bactrian monarchy at one time embraced both Kábulistán and part of India. Bámián could not but have entered into the composition of this monarchy, but nevertheless we have no decided information as to what it represented at that time: no, not an atom of information.

After this period, in the first century A.D. we find the name of the town of Bámián in the Chinese writer Ban-gu in his "Histories of the oldest Khanates."* But in any case the accurate history of Bámián commences only with Súán-Shán. He was the first to give us not only a very accurate account of the valley and its memorials, but the most accurate of all descriptions which have been made since him by Musulman writers. The accuracy of his description is so great that even the English travellers in the second quarter of the present century could only add very little to it. I will consequently permit myself to extract the translation of the passage from the description of the celebrated Chinese pilgrim:—

"The kingdom of Fan-yan-na (Bámián) extends from east to west for 2,000 'li,'† and from south to north for 300 'li.' It lies amongst snowy mountains. The inhabitants live in small towns,‡ constructed on the slopes of the hills or at the bottom of the valley. The capital is placed on the slopes of two hills opposite each other and crosses the valley. It is 6 or 7 li in length. On the north it rests against lofty and steep cliffs. This country produces late barley, but there are few fruits or flowers here; it possesses magnificent pastures which are suitable for grazing large flocks of sheep and troops of horses. The climate is very cold. The customs are coarse and cruel. The greater part of the inhabitants wear clothes of fur and wool; this kind of clothes is better suited to the climate.

"The letters of the alphabet, rules of government, and many tokens used in trade, are the same as in the kingdom of Tou-kha-ra (Tou-cho-lo); the spoken language is somewhat different, but there is a great resemblance between the traits of face of these two nations.

"On the slope of the hill to the north-east of the capital is the stone statue of Buddha, who is represented standing. The statue is from 140 to 150 feet high. It is a glittering gold colour; the eye is blinded in looking at its precious ornamentation. To the east of this is situated a monastery which was built by the first king of this kingdom. In the purity of their religion the inhabitants of Bámián (Fan-yan-na) far excel their neighbours. Here there is not a single man who does not do

* Gregoriev, "Kábulistán and Káfiristán," page 986.

† A "li" is a measure, as stated above, equal to half verst (⅓ mile). Gregoriev in one place in his work reckons it at half verst, in another at less than quarter verst. ("Kábulistán and Káfiristán," page 812, Note 76, and page 817, Note 90.) In the present case it will be better to take the size of a "li" at quarter verst (⅙ mile), otherwise the proportions of the Bámián kingdom will be unreasonably great.

‡ The forts of English travellers.

reverence before the 'Three Holy elements' and does not respect all spiritual things. There exist here several dozen monasteries in which there are several thousand monks of the order of Choue-tchou-chi-pou who follow 'Petit-Véhicule.'*

"On the slope of a hill to the north-east of the capital is a stone statue of Buddha represented standing. The statue is 140 to 150 feet high. It is of a bright gold colour, and the eye is duzzled in beholding its costly adornment. To the east of this is situated the monastery which was built by the first king of this kingdom.

"To the east of this monastery rises the brazen statue of Chi kia-fo (Shakiámun Buddha), also represented in a standing position, about 100 feet high: each part of it was moulded separately, and the complete standing figure of Buddha was formed by joining all the parts together.

"At 12 or 13 li to the east of the town, in a monastery, one can see a reclining figure of Buddha, the length of which is about 1,000 feet.†

"Whenever the king celebrates the festival of 'the Deliverance,' he offers as a sacrifies everything, commencing with his wives and children, and winding up with his treasure. When his treasure is finished, the king even offers himself as a sacrifice. Then the authorities of the country go to the monks and ransom the king. These pious acts form the chief occupation of the king."‡

Notwithstanding, however, such a full and accurate account of the celebrated valley, it is impossible not to point out some inaccuracies, want of clearness, and even blanks in the work of the celebrated Chinaman.

First of all we must speak of the proportions of the territory of the Bámián kingdom. Judging by the figures which Súán-Shán gives,—that is, taking the extent of the Bámián kingdom from east to west at 500 to 1,000 versts (333 to 666 miles),—the following would be also included in the Bámián territory: On the west the kingdom of Tzi-chi (Ki-chi), and on the east not only the kingdom of Kapisa, Kofene, but also Gandára. However, Súán-Shán describes these kingdoms as completely separate and independent territories.

Then it is impossible to pass over in silence the statement of Súán-Shán that the second or lesser statue of Buddha was carved out of brass. Judging by the position of this statue as it is fixed by the Chinese traveller, this is the same statue which I ascended with Colonel Razgonov. But this statue is of stone, just the same as the first is; I not only saw it but felt it.

With regard to the statement of Súán-Shán that the larger statue has a brilliant gold colour, there are now no traces of its having been gilt. I must remark, however, that the colour of the plaster on the Colossus is yellow.

It is also remarkable that Súán-Shán says not a word about the picturesque paintings with which the roof of the arch of the niche is

* The Khinayan sect of Buddhists.—Gregoriev's "Kábulistán and Káfiristán," p. 988.

† Masson also mentions this idol, which is to the east of Gul-Guléh in a small valley running from the south into the Bámián Valley. But its size is only 50 feet. Of the identity of Gul-Guléh with the citadel of the ancient Bámián, see below under this head.

‡ Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales par Hiouen Thsang, traduits par St. Yulien, Vol. I, pp. 36-38.

covered. He also says not a word of the smaller statues cut out in the three other niches, and which I have mentioned in my description.

With regard to the third colossal statue, the Mission neither saw it nor heard anything about it from the natives who knew the locality. But it is impossible not to draw attention to the fact that Súán-Shán gives very important indications relative to the site of the contemporaneous and probably ancient city of Bámián; but about this I will speak further on.

In the time of Súán-Shán the Buddhist religion was in force in Bámián. From the circumstance that in his time this religion was so firmly established, which is shown by the development of monasteries to such an enormous extent, it is clear that it had been propagated here long before his time. Let us suppose that the first seeds of Buddhism sprang up here in the third century B.C. The inhabitants of Bámián were apparently in affluent circumstances, if they were able to maintain scores of monasteries and many thousand monks; the mighty architectural memorials, which have been preserved to the present day, also speak to the fact that the inhabitants were not unacquainted with a rather high class of civilization.

Nevertheless the traveller says that the habits of the inhabitants were coarse and cruel. At the same time he praises their religious character. If one can explain these contradictions, it is perhaps only by the fact that, in olden times, religious devotion went hand in hand with savage habits.

Besides the information of Súán-Shán about Bámián, we have also other Chinese statements about it referring to the same seventh century. These are included in "Histories of the Tkhan Dynasties." There it says that the country of Fan-yan, lying at the foot of the Sibi-mo-lyan mountains in the neighbourhood of Tou-kho-lo, marches with the territories of Gov-shihyan, Gibin, and Khe-da-lo-ji. The climate is cold; the people live in caves, and the town of Lo-lan is the place of residence of the ruler; there are five large towns in the country; a river watering the country flows north, and falls into the River Ukhu (Oxus).* From this source we learn that in 627 A.D. the king of the territory of Fan-yan sent an ambassador to the Chinese Court, and in 658 this territory was already reckoned in the Saifín Government of the Chinese Empire, for the ruler of Bámián now began to be styled only "The Sai-fin Tútún." The dependance of Bámián on the Chinese Empire was apparently complete, and it paid the Chinese Government a yearly tribute.

Within a hundred years approximately after this, or it might be a little sooner, Bámián saw within its walls a crowd of fanatical followers of Muhammad. Notwithstanding the great devotion of the native princes to the religion of Buddha, which Súán-Shán so lovingly informs us of, it appears that the Bámián rulers became Musulman sooner than other neighbouring rulers,—for instance, those of Kábul. The Arab writer of the tenth century, Ahmed Ibn Yakúbi, informs us that the first of the Bámián rulers who embraced Islamism was Shír, called the "Dikhán," an old Persian title. He lived under Khalíf Mansúr (from 755 to 774 A.D.).† From this time the Bámián kings, the *ci-devant* "Sai-fin Tútúns" of the Chinese Empire, became the vassals of the Caliph (Khalíf) of Baghdad. In 871, Yakúb, the son of Lait, Viceroy of Khurásán, having subdued

* Kábulistán and Káfiristán, p. 989.

† Gregoriev, page 990.

Balkh and Tokharistán, determined to overthrow the King of Kábul in the very heart of his dominions. Upon this he marched by way of Bámián; Kábul was taken and its king fell a prisoner into the hands of the Musulmans.

Yakúb also subdued Arrakhosia, adjacent to Bámián, the king of which he killed and compelled the inhabitants to embrace Islamism.* The Arab leader returned to his capital with great plunder, amongst which were many golden statues of Indian gods. Part of these statues were taken by the conqueror from the temple at Bámián.†

This is what this same Ibn Ahmed Yakúbi tells us about Bámián itself, in his work "Kitáb-ul-fihrist":—

"In Bámián there is a temple to which pilgrims crowd from all parts of India. In the temple there are many golden idols, studded with precious stones. It was from this temple that Yakúb, the son of Lait, took part of the idols which he sent to Baghdad as a present to the Caliph." The writer then speaks of two colossal statues, cut in the cliffs forming the sides of the valley; the statues had a height of 80 cubits.‡ The Indians visiting them brought perfumes and sacrifices. The statues could be seen from a great distance; pilgrims on approaching them had to cast their eyes down to the earth long before they could see the idols. If a pilgrim accidentally saw the idols, he had to turn back and commence his approach again.§

It will be seen that, notwithstanding the frequent incursions of the Musulmans into this valley, sacred in the eyes of the Hindus, and notwithstanding that the Bámián rulers themselves had changed the faith of their ancestors and professed Islamism, the holy places in Bámián were still objects of great reverence in the eyes of the native population; for the Musulman régime was apparently powerless in its efforts to root out Buddhism here. This is what we read in the same Arab writer:—

"In this spot much blood was spilt; it has probably seen 50,000 men have their lives sacrificed here to the idols"§

After this, in the tenth century, Bámián apparently played a prominent part amongst the neighbouring semi-independent kingdoms. Thus Ibn-Haukal, amongst the number of the countries and towns dependent upon Bámián, mentions Kábul. But the information generally which the Arab geographers and travellers give us about it is very short, although characteristic.

Ibn-Haukal informs us that "Bámián is a town about half as large as Balkh, situated on a hill; in front of this hill flows a river, casting its waters into Garjistán; Bámián has neither gardens nor vegetable gardens; in this district there is only one town, situated on a hillock."‖

In the writings of another Arab geographer and traveller, a contemporary of Ibn-Haukal's, Istákhri, still less is said about Bámián: "The capital in Bámián is aboút half the size of Balkh and situated on a hill, in front of which runs a large stream.¶" That is all.

* Renaud—Mémoire sur l'Inde, page 209.
† Ditto ditto, page 289.
‡ From the elbow to the tips of the fingers=1 cubit.
§ Renaud—Mémoire sur l'Inde, page 290.
‖ Oriental Geography of Ibn-Haukal, page 225.
¶ Al-Istakhri, Liber climatum: aus dem arabischen uberzetzt von Mordtmann. Hamburg, 1845, page 120.

In the later Arab writers the information about Bámián is also very scanty. They almost repeat, word, for word what has been said before by other writers.

Thus Edrisi, an Arab geographer, in the middle of the twelfth century, in describing Bámián, confines himself to the following few words :—

"Bámián is a town in size equal to about one-third of Balkh; it is situated on the top of the Bámián hill; there is no other town in the country situated at such a height. Various streams and brooks flow from the Bámián mountains and run into the River Anderáb. The town is surrounded by walls, possesses a fort, a large mosque, and extensive suburbs. The following are dependent on Bámián: Sigurkand, Saksvand, Kábul, Bokhra, Karvan, and Goria." *

And yet not a word about the celebrated antiquities of the valley! Not much more in the way of details is found in the later Musulman writer, Yakúb (in the beginning of the thirteenth century). But he at all events mentions, though in a few words, the celebrated Bámián Colossi. "Bámián," he says, "is the name of a town and considerable district situated between Balkh and Ghazni in the mountains; the town is not large, but it is the chief place of an extensive territory. "Ten days' journey separate it from Balkh and eight from Ghazni. Here one may see a building of wonderful height; it is supported by enormous columns and covered with paintings representing all kinds of birds created by God. In the cliffs are two idols cut out of it, reaching from its foot to the very summit. One of these is called the "Red idol" and the other the "White idol." There is nothing to be seen in the whole world like these statues."†

It is impossible not to notice the almost unanimous testimony of the Arab and Persian writers that there was only one town, namely, Bámián (Namian of Edrisi). For several centuries it not only played the part of the chief town of its district, but even such celebrated towns as Kábul and Panjgír were politically dependent upon it.

This state of affairs continued, according to Edrisi, even in the twelfth century. One must remark, however, that the Arab geographers in this case contradict themselves, as will be shown by me in its proper place further on.

The Musulman authors, commencing with Ibn Haukal, do not say that a separate, more or less independent, king ruled over Bámián, as was the case up to the time of the visit of Yakúb, the son of Lait.

In the tenth century Bámián was under the superior authority of the rulers of Trans-Oxania, the Semanides. Later, with the fall of the house of Semanides, and the rise of the Ghaznivide dynasty, Bámián formed part of the Ghaznivide monarchy. In the twelfth century,—that is, at the time when, according to Edrisi's statement, even Kábul was dependent upon Bámián,—Bámián itself was dependent on the princes of Gaur, who had destroyed the Ghaznivide monarchy and had built up their savage kingdom on its ruins. In the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century Bámián entered into the composition of the vast Kharizm monarchy, which was formed, as it were, out of nothing. From

* Geographie d'Edrisi, translated from the Arabic into French by A. Joubert, Vol. I, page 477.

† Gregoriev, "Kabulistán and Káfiristân," page 986.

† Barbier de Meynard, "Dictionnaire de la Perse," p. 80.

the Kharizm Shah, Allah-ud-din who took Bámián from the Gaurides, even the coinage has come down to us with the inscription that it was coined in Bámián.*

But it was in 1221 that a storm broke over Bámián, that same tornado carrying everything before it in its path, which broke over Khurásán and over Maur-un-nahr (Trans-Oxania). This tornado appeared in the form of the invasion of Chengiz Khán. Not long before this, Chengiz Khán had reduced the flourishing towns of Trans-Oxania and Khurásán to heaps of ruins. Pursuing his hereditary foe, the Kharizm Khán, Jalal-ud-din (son of Allah-ud-din), Chengiz Khán besieged Bámián. His attacks were several times beaten off, but finally the town fell. In this fight the grandson of Chengiz Khán, Mutugán (eldest son of Jagatai Khán), was killed.

Incensed by this, the Mongols massacred the whole population of the town, neither sparing age nor sex. The citadel was thrown down and the place was called Mu-balig, *i.e.*, the evil town.†

From this time tho town of Bámián disappeared from the face of the earth; it could not only not attain to its former flourishing condition, but could never even recover at all from its destruction.

After this Bámián became the usual station for Central Asian conquerors on their way to reach India. Thus Tamerlane followed the Bámián Valley; Sultán Báber also marched by this valley, not, it is true, with the object of conquering India, nor did he march through this now deserted valley from the valley of the Amú. No; at this time he was already the possessor of Kábul and India. Baber at this time was returning with his troops from Herat to Kábul. This seems to have been the only case in which a commander passed through the whole of the Hazáraját with troops, and that too in the winter.

Abul Fazal, the Vizier of the Emperor of India, Akbár, in his work "Ain Akbári," gives us some information about Bāmiān. The Bámián Valley at this time was included in the empire of the Mongols, namely, in the province of Cashmir. This is the condition in which this locality was in the second half of the sixteenth century.

"In Zohák-Bámián," says the author, is the Fort of Zohák, a memorial of the deepest antiquity; it is pretty well preserved, while the fortress of Bámián is in ruins.

"In the middle of these mountains (Bámián) are 12,000 caves cut in the cliffs and embellished with various ornamentations. These caves are called 'Sumij,' ‡ and in ancient times served as winter residences for the local inhabitants.

"There are three wonderful idols here. One of them represents a male, 186 feet high; the second represents a female, 116 feet high; and the third is like a child, 35 feet high.

"In one of these caves is a sepulchre containing a coffin, and in this is a human body.

"Relative to this body, not even the oldest inhabitant could remember anything, but it receives the greatest reverence.

"The people of old undoubtedly possessed such medicinal means that if they smeared a dead body with them, it would not decay with time if

* Gregoriev, "Kábulistán and Káfiristán," p. 990.

† Abul Ghazi, Bahadur Khán; Histories des Mogols, Vol. II, p. 122.

‡ Apparently the Pushtu word "Smatz" a cave.—*Translator.*

buried in dry ground; there is no doubt that this body was prepared in this manner, although the ignorant see something miraculous in this."*

This is the first time apparently the name of the Fort of Zohák is mentioned in the chronicles of Musulman writers. Up to this, as we have seen above, neither the Persian nor Arab geographers and travellers have ever said a word about Zohák's fort.

It is further known that Aurungzeb in his march on Balkh passed through the Bámián Valley. By his order several rounds from cannon were fired at the big idol, owing to which both legs of the Colossus were much mutilated. In the middle of the last century Bámián was included in the ephemeral monarchy of Nádir Sháh, and after him it formed part of the Afghán kingdom, which has continued up to the present day.

This celebrated valley, long before the present day, attracted to itself the notice of Europeans. Before any of us visited it, much was written about it in the pages of European and Asiatic journals, in which the information of Musulman writers was partly made use of, and also in part information obtained by enquiries. As an example of such works of European students, we must point out Wilford's article under the title of "On Mount Caucasus," published in the 6th volume of the English journal "Asiatic Researches."

The author, amongst other information, makes use of that furnished to him by a Musulman traveller, by name Miyan Asad Shah. Together with some very accurate information in his statements, we meet with some inventions which have really no foundation. Thus, repeating the false statement of Abul Fazal that the lesser of the two idols represents a woman, he especially lays stress on his fact, and says: "One Colossus actually represents a woman, both in the beauty and softness of its outline, as well as by the projection of the breasts."† As a matter of fact there is nothing of the kind; the breast of the Colossus which is second in size, is just as flat and its whole figure just as wanting in beauty as the larger Colossus.

Then, too, we read that the distance separating one Colossus from the other is 40 paces. This statement is also untrue; the distance between the two Colossi is several hundred sajénes (1 sajéne = 2⅓ yards). Then Wilford informs us that both Colossi face eastwards, and in the morning when the sun rises they are, as it were, smiling, but in the evening when the sun is setting they appear to be frowning. I would repeat that the faces of the Colossi are completely mutilated, so that in no way could they furnish this optical impression of which Wilford speaks, even if they were turned towards the east; but one of them faces south and the other south-east.

These mistakes are possible ones and to some extent excusable, as the information which served as the base of the article was obtained by enquiry, *i.e.*, was more or less open to doubt. The European author-spectators, who have written about this valley, have claims on our time, so let us now pass on to them. The first Europeans who saw the celebrated antiquities of Bámián were Moorcroft and Trebeck in 1824. The notes of these unfortunate travellers, sought out by Dr. Lord and published by the celebrated Sanscrit scholar Wilson, 16 years after their death, give us pretty detailed information about Bámián. Later English

* "Ain Akbári," translated by Francis Gladwin, Vol. II, p. 183. London, 1800.
† "Asiatic Researches," Vol. VI, page 466.

travellers could add very little to Moorcroft's description. I must remark, however, that in addition to the inaccuracies common to all English travellers relative to what they understand by the town of Bámián, there are in Moorcroft other inaccuracies, though not very important ones. For instance, under these inaccuracies we may point out the following expressions: "On our left," says the traveller, "was the river, and right in front of us rose a vertical cliff, in which are the two celebrated idols, and the whole vertical surface of which is covered with caves like a honey-comb."* The traveller went from the direction of the Ahangar defile, *i.e.*, approached the idols from thee ast, consequently he could not have had the idols on his left hand, for the vertical cliff, forming the northern edge of the valley and in which the Colossi are cut, must have been on his right hand. Or for another instance: "Further on we crossed the Bámián stream, which, running west, joins the River Kálú."† Here the mistake consists in the fact that the Bámián River does not run west but east.

In 1828, the agent of the English Government, Stirling, traversed the Bámián Valley on his route from Persia to India. But he gives generally little information about the country visited by him.

In 1832, the Transylvanian Königberger, who was serving as Doctor at the Court of the "Lion of the Punjab," Runjit Sing, passed through here. He, on the contrary, was travelling from India to Europe, through Kábul, Bámián, and Bukhára. He also has told us little about Bámián.

It was only Burnes who opened a new epoch for the geography of Bámián. The most detailed descriptions of the celebrated valley were first given by him. Although Moorcroft had visited it earlier than Burnes, yet the description of his travels appeared much later than Burnes' "Travels into Bukhára," and the honour of being the first European geographer who had been in this land of Buddhism belongs solely to Burnes. I will not give here the whole description of the Bámián Valley which is found in Burnes' book. I will merely confine myself to pointing out the inaccuracies and mistakes of the daring English traveller which I have noticed.

Thus Burnes does not state what he understands under the word "Bámián"—whether it is the town of Gul-Guléh, the place where the Colossi are, or the largest mass of caves in the whole valley generally.

One place apparently leads us to think that under the word "Bámián" he understands the group of caves which exist about the large Colossus. "Caves are excavated on both sides of the valley," he says, "but the greater part of them are on the northern side, where the large idol stands; together they form a large town." But if we accept this group of caves as the town, then we must call the whole north side of the valley the town, which is pierced with caves for a length of nearly 10 versts (6⅔ miles), both located in groups and detached. Then Burnes speaks of two Colossi only, and repeats the inventions of Musulman writers about their sex, namely, that one statue represents a man, and the other, the smaller one, a woman. Above I have already pointed out that from the exterior appearance of the two Colossi it is not possible to judge of their sex; both figures are equally coarse and unsymmetrical. "The Colossus,"

* Moorcroft, "Journey to the Himalayan Provinces—Kábul, Bokhára, &c.," Vol. II, page 386.

† Moorcroft Vol. II, page 387.

says Burnes, "has broad lips, long and pendant ears, and on his head there was apparently a tiara." I did not observe either the broad lips or the long and pendant ears; with regard to the tiara on the head, at the present time there is nothing existing on which to found this statement. The opinion of Burnes as to the origin of these idols is not without interest owing to its naïvty:—

"It is by no means improbable that we owe the idols of Bámián to the caprice of some person of rank who resided in this cave-digging neighbourhood, and sought to immortalise himself in the colossal images which we have now described."

There also travelled with Burnes, Dr. Gerard and the Cashmiri Mohun Lál. The former of these, in two letters written on the road,* tells us very little about Bámián; he too only speaks of two idols. Mohun Lál, however, mentions a third Colossus, smaller than the two first, but he calls all the statues beautiful.†

In the same year 1832, the most circumstantial of the English travellers of this decade in Afghánistán, Masson, visited the Bámián Valley. But he too, notwithstanding the fact that he travelled under more favourable circumstances than all his predecessors and contemporaries, does not give nearly so much information about Bámián as we should have expected. He, as well as Mohun Lál, speaks of three large Colossi. Besides this, he informs us that many empty niches also exist, in which there have never been any idols.‡

But from Masson's descriptions also we cannot comprehend what he understands by the word "Bámián." Is it the group of caves about both Colossi? is it one of the ancient forts situated along the stream, and one of which Mohun Lál calls by the name of Bámián? or is it something else? This is what we read on the subject in Masson.

"Leaving the fort of Amír Mahomed Tajik on our right, we reached a spot immediately opposite the ruins of the citadel of Gul-Guléh, where, in the hills on the opposite side of the valley from Gul-Guléh, but not far from it, are a large number of caves. Going a short distance further we reached Bámián, where we encamped opposite the colossal idols."§

From the part of Masson's description quoted, we can only suppose that he calls Bámián one of the villages situated in the vicinity of the group of Colossi.

Then this traveller describes in rather minute detail the ruins of Gul-Guléh, and concludes, on the basis of the remains of numerous mosques found by him, that Gul-Guléh was formerly a Musulman town.

During the year 1840-41, the Bámián Valley was not only visited by single English tourists, but by whole detachments of troops. From that time up to 1878 not a single European has been in the Bámián Valley.

In 1878 the historical valley saw, for the first time on its sacred soil, "Northern guests"—the Russian Mission. I could now finish my historical review of this valley, but I would wish to give expression to some reflections on the subject of the position of the ancient town of Bámián. If these reflections, even to some small extent, clear up this dark and much-contested question, my object will have been more than attained.

* Published in Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. II.
† Travels in the Punjab, Afghánistán, &c., p. 86. London, 1846.
‡ Masson's Various Journeys, Vol. II, p. 383.
§ Masson's Various Journeys, Vol. II, p 379.

As we know, the celebrated Berlin geographer, Ritter, was convinced that, here in the Bámián Valley, "Alexandria Sub-Caucasia"* was founded by Alexander of Macedon, about which his histories tells us. But the information which is furnished us by the ancient historians and geographers of Alexander are so short and inaccurate that Ritter himself is troubled to point out the existence of this town in the valley named.†

I must remark that, basing one's enquiries on the sources of which Ritter has made use, it is impossible even to maintain that Alexandria was built in the Bámián Valley. The following is what we read on the subject in Arian :—

"Having conquered the rebellious Arians, Alexander marched to the Caucasus Mountain, where he founded a city and called it Alexandria; making here, according to custom, a sacrifice to the gods, he passed on through the Caucasus."‡

That is all. And here is what we read in Quintus Curtius on the subject :—

"In 16 days the army effected the passage through the Caucasus. Here there was a rock 10 stadii in circumference and 4 in height, upon which, according to the ancients, Prometheus was chained. At the foot of the hill was the place selected for the building of the town; 7,000 aged Macedonians and soldiers unfit for the further campaign were left in this new town. The inhabitants called it Alexandria."§

In Strabo still less is said about the town.

"Having wintered there (*i.e.*, in the lands of the Paropamisides), and having founded the town, Alexander, having India in view, crossed the mountains into Bactriana."‖

This is all. The reader himself can see how much foundation there is, on the basis of the information just communicated, for locating "Sub-Caucasian" Alexandria in the Bámián Valley. Although the idea of attributing the tradition about Prometheus being chained to a rock is very enticing, yet it is first necessary to prove that the Colossi existed here at least several centuries before the campaigns of Alexander of Macedon, and to prove this at the present time is impossible. It is true that the existing tradition relative to the time of the construction of these Colossi places it at 1,000 years B.C.,¶ and that the Afghán traditions communicated to us, *viz.*, that Gul-Guléh is nothing but the remains of the town built by Sikandar Zulkarnain (Alexander of Macedon), also speak of the great antiquity of the ruins in the valley, but all this affords no proofs of the existence here of Alexandria "Sub-Caucasia." Consequently Burnes' supposition of finding this town here is quite in vain.¶ With regard to the situation of the Buddhist Bámián, the Bāmiān of the time of Súán Shán, we are furnished with much better topographical indications.

Judging by Súán Shán's text** above quoted, ancient Bámián must have been somewhere about the ruins of Gul-Guléh, which comprise the remains of the citadel of the town. The depositions of the first Musulman writers, too, are not contradictory to this more than probable

* Ritter, "Kábulistán and Káfiristán," Gregoriev's Translation, p. 101.
† Ditto ditto ditto, p. 114.
‡ Ἀρριανου Ἀναβασις, Book 3, Chap. 28.
§ Quintus Curtius, Book 7, Chap. III.
‖ Strabo's Geography.
¶ Travels into Bukhára.
** See above in this Chapter p. 141.—*Translator.*

supposition, for they affirm with one voice that there was *only one town* in the Bámián district, and at the same time do not mention any ruins which were in the neighbourhood of this town.

The following is what is said upon this subject by V. V. Gregoriev, the author of such an excellent work as his translation of the 2nd chapter of the 5th volume of Ritter's Erd Kunde :—

"In the Buddhist period and before it, when Gul-Guléh did not exist, another town was called by the name of Bámián, which must have been on the site of the small town which is now called Bámián or else a little south of it; this position of ancient Bámián must be concluded from the indications of Súán Shán that the most colossal of the statues of Shakiamuni Buddha stood, in his time, to the north-east of the citadel. When, at some time unknown to us, and from causes which are equally unknown, the *ancient original Bámián* was destroyed, its name passed naturally to *another new* town which began to spring up in its neighbourhood; and when this new town (Gul-Guléh) was also, in its turn, destroyed by the devastating Chengiz, the name of Bámián again passed from it to the old site, where there sprung up the *latest* village now bearing that name."*

In order to decide the question as to the site of ancient Bámián, it is first necessary to fix where the present town of Bámián stands. From my description the reader has seen that at the present time there is *no town of Bámián*, but there are several villages, scattered about the valley in different places. It is evident that by accepting one of these villages as the town, we do not get a step nearer to the decision of the question. If we take as the town of Bámián that group of caves which Burnes indicates by this name, then the statement of Súán Shán, that the capital is to the south-west of the great Colossus, directly contradicts this supposition. We must also take into consideration that the Buddhist monasteries, which one must consider to be the groups of caves near the Colossi, were never built near towns. Therefore, in consequence of this one circumstance alone, the capital could not have been located in caves, alongside of the Colossi, and therefore with the monasteries. Thus Gregoriev's reference to the site of the *latest* Bámián and his identification of it with the *oldest* Bámián is unsuccessful. The translation of the town of Bámián from one place to another is thus also shown to be unproved.

Above I have said that in my opinion Gul-Guléh represents the citadel of the town which Súán Shán describes; Gul-Guléh also serves as the citadel of the "Musulman" town destroyed by Chengiz Khán. This opinion relies upon the following data :—

"The capital," says Súán Shán, "is placed upon the slopes of two opposite hills, and crosses the valley; on the north it rests upon steep slopes. In length it is 6 to 7 li. To the north-east of the citadel, on the slope of the mountains, are the stone statues of Buddha."

One must notice that on the west of Gul-Guléh ruins approach it, situated in the valley. These ruins taken together with Gul-Guléh stand in just the same relation to the Colossi as Súán Shán gives to this town. Then the Chinese traveller says that "the citadel on the north side rests on steep cliffs."

* Gregoriev, "Kábulistán and Káfiristán, p. 991.

This is comprehensible, because having crossed the valley to the north, the capital could not stretch any further, but must rest against the cliffs, as these are here vertical, whereas towards the south it could not only reach to the hills, but rise up them, as they are here much gentler than the northern ones.

Then we may mention that Masson speaks about one colossus which is to the east of Gul-Guléh, in a particular valley running into that of Bámián from the south. With this information the following statement of Súán Shán presents itself for comparison :—

"At 12 or 13 li from the town to the east, in a monastery may be seen a lying-down statue of Buddha, immersed in the Nirwana; the length of this statue is 1,000 feet."

If one compares the distance from the ruins which are to the west of Gul-Guléh up to the little valley lying to the east of Gul-Guléh (where Masson saw the statue, 50 feet long) with the distance from the capital to the monastery in which was the lying-down statue of Buddha, it is impossible not to observe almost complete conformity; 12 or 13 li is 3 or 4 versts (2 to 2⅔ mile), just the distance which separate Masson's valley from the ruins named.

If there is anything which does not agree in these statements, it is the size of the statue. Masson gives it as 50 feet and Súán Shán says 1,000 feet. But it is very probable that Súán Shán's numbers have been mutilated in transcribing.

The remainder agrees perfectly.

CHAPTER VIII.

From Bámián to Kábul.

The Irák Valley—Ascent to the Great Irák Pass—Connecting knot between the Hindu Kúsh and the Kúh-i-Bábá—The village of Kharzár—The fortification of Gardan-Diwar—The Unnai Pass—Descent into the valley of the Kábul River—Sar-Chashma—Koti-Ashru—Arrival of Sardár Abdulla Khán—The last pass on the road to Kábul—Safid Khák—Cultivation of the Upper part of the valley of the Kábul River—Arrival of Wazír Sháh Muhammad Khán—A day at Kalah-i-Kázi—Elephants—The latest post from Táshkand—Telegram about the opening of the Berlin Congress—Triumphal procession of the Russian Mission on elephants, and entry into Kábul—Reception given to the Mission by the Kábul populace.

Entering the Irák Valley by a very narrow mountain cleft, we rode for some time along its western edge at the very foot of the mountains.

The hot rays of the southern sun poured with a mighty flood into the whole of this pleasant valley, which was surrounded on all sides by lofty and almost vertical cliffs.

The cliffs here are variegated with every colour of the rainbow, and are chiefly composed of indurated earth. The summits of the neighbouring mountains were covered with snow, though there was considerably less on the eastern and northern sides than on the others.

The whole valley presents a rectangular area, somewhat elongated in the direction of the meridian. Its breadth is not more than 1 verst, whilst its length is considerably more, and to the south it merges into the defile leading to the Great Irák Pass. To the north, in all probability it communicates with the valley of the Bámián River. One could also see a bay in the valley towards the north-east; it is very probable that Masson went through this bay.*

A stream zig-zags through the valley carrying a considerable mass of water. It flows from south to north, and is lost to sight in a gorge on the northern edge of the valley. There is no doubt that this stream falls into the Bámián River. Judging by the known actual elevation of the valley (about 9,000 feet),† one might have thought that here there was no necessity for artificial irrigation, both in consequence of the temperate character of the summer heat as well as the comparative abundance of rain falling in summer. Nevertheless irrigation channels intersect this beautiful valley in various directions. Near one of these, more than 7 feet wide, our tents were pitched.

The valley is very well cultivated; fields, sown with wheat, occupy a great part of its area; here, however, a great deal of beans are also sown. The wheat was already quite ripe and in many places cut. It was impossible that this fact should not attract our attention. In the Bámián Valley, the actual height of which is somewhat less than that of Irák, the wheat at that time was not in ear, but here, as I said, it was partly

* Masson, Various Journeys, pages 447-9, Vol. II.

† According to Griffiths.

reaped. I think that this difference in the time of ripening of the crops is due to the fact that the Bámián Valley is more open, and more subject to the action of cold winds, as on the north it is only bounded by a comparatively low hill range; but the Irák Valley is protected on all sides and is a deep mountain basin; the rays of the sun, reflected from the neighbouring mountains and rocks, are collected in this valley as in a focus, and thus cause the existence of a higher average temperature in it in comparison with that of Bámián. Throughout the valley are scattered in various places ten fortified villages, which here I willingly call forts, although mud ones. One of these forts is only a few yards from our tents. The temperature taken here at 1-30 P.M., in the shade of the tent, gave 83·5° F. The march made by us this day was not a long one. The Debír declared that the whole distance from Fort Muhummad Topchi to the Irák Valley was only 5 krohs, *i.e.*, about 10 miles; but I greatly doubt this: we travelled not less than 20 versts (13⅓ miles).

In the evening an apparently very unimportant circumstance destroyed the equanimity of our little camp. The Afgháns perceived, on the saddle formed between two opposite peaks due north of us, a small group of horsemen. Where the horsemen were there was apparently no road or path, so that, it was supposed, they rode in single file. This group halted for some time, looked at our camp, and quickly disappeared in the neighbouring rocks.

This apparition had nothing in it unusual in the eyes of the Mission, and probably we should not have given the matter any attention. Our Afghán fellow-travellers, however, did not look upon it in the same light.

Mossin Khán became very serious. He turned his hands into a telescope and commenced to look attentively at the suspicious group. Then he determined that they were Hazáras, and that "it was necessary to keep a sharp look-out." He at once made arrangements to strengthen the usual night guards. The tents were again taken from the Cossacks at night, and they themselves were again disposed round the tents of the Mission.

However, the night passed quite quietly, and on the following day, about 5 A.M., we commenced to ascend the Great Irák Pass.

First of all we had to traverse the field of the valley, through small picturesque gardens, pleasantly shading the mud walls of some "forts." On this road we had several times to cross small streams, carrying their bright, sparkling water noisily along. To the south, about 2 versts (1⅓ mile) from our camp, the defile became rather narrow, and sharp ridges of schistose rocks here rose almost vertically, preventing the rays of the sun from entering the narrow defile. This, however, did not prevent both sides of the stream from being embellished with a soft carpet of emerald-green grass. On the left, for a distance of ½ a verst (⅓ mile) along the valley extended caves, not so numerous as in the Bámián Valley, and not so well excavated as they were there.

At about 5 or 6 versts (4 miles) from our halting ground a lateral ravine opened out on our left (east) and a path wound along it. To my question, "Where does this path lead?" the Afgháns accompanying me replied that it led to the Shil ar Pass.* Wishing to verify their

* In Benderski's sketch of the route the direction of the route to the Shibar Pass is shown otherwise.

statement, I asked Mossin Khán and received the same answer. We then had to traverse our defile for 8 versts (5⅓ miles), after which we reached a rather wide mountain space. On issuing on to this space, the remains of a transverse wall were seen, with the ruins of a fortification in the centre of it. To the questions as to what these ruins were, the Afgháns replied to me that this was Káfir-kalah, and that it had been constructed in remote antiquity,—"when the Káfirs still possessed this country," added one long-bearded old Afghán. We then again had to follow a narrow defile, hemmed in by bristling schistose cliffs. The path was thickly covered with clods and stones of various kinds; side by side with fragments of schist lay those of crystalline rocks; slabs of shale lay here and there. Sometimes along the banks of the stream, iron springs, with their rusty yellow miniature streams, were met with; in some places the smell of sulphuretted hydrogen gas was strongly perceived, and in some miniature craters along the bank of the stream, bubbles of this gas were constantly bursting on the surface of the water, upon which a slight gurgling noise was heard. Sometimes the path ran along a narrow cornice, and then the crunching of the broken pieces of shale under the horses' hoofs was painfully audible. At about 10 miles from our halting ground the summits of the hills took a softer outline. Scanty fields sown with barley ran down the sides of the hills, the grain in these places being still quite green, though in full ear. Irrigation channels run from the stream flowing at the bottom of the gorge, sometimes extended along the steep slopes of the hills to these fields. These channels sometimes rose several score feet above the level of the brook, consequently they must have been brought to the fields from a distance of some versts.

At about 20 versts (13⅓ miles) from our last camping ground, the defile split into two branches—a south-eastern and a south western. We followed the eastern one, and soon reached a snow-drift occupying the defile for a space of several hundred square sajénes.* The snow was so hard that not only did our riding horses but also our baggage animals cross it without sticking at all.

When we had crossed this snow-field, I took the temperature of the stream and found it 46·4° F.; that of the air in the shade at the same place was 55·4° F.; it was at this time about 8 A.M. Going about 2 versts further up the gorge, we again reached a snow-field somewhat smaller in proportion than the preceding one. Now commenced a very steep ascent to the pass, the top of which was visible in front of us and still very high above us. The horses were given a rest. Whilst we were resting, a Hazára family entertained us on fresh sheeps'-milk cheese. This cheese is apparently a very nourishing substance, with a very strong taste. Its taste is very much like that of the cheese made by our Bashkírs and Kirghiz, and known by the name of "Krut." The nomad encampment of our accidental nomad hosts consisted of a few tents and yurt-shaped huts, covered with felts blackened by soot and worn with age. From out of the tents peeped the heads of several women and children. Their features reminded one very little of the Tartar or Mongol type. They had black hair, bright black eyes, slightly curved nose, and not at all projecting cheek-bones; these were the chief traits of their faces. Out-

* 1 sajéne = 2⅓ yards.

side the tents stood two or three grown-up Hazára men who offered us cheese and milk. Round about on the hills roamed the "atar" or flocks of sheep, and one flock was seen almost on the summit of the Irák peak.

The actual ascent to the Irák peak is one mile in length and excessively steep. The road, however, is pretty good; it is rather wide (7 to 14 feet), and runs over soft, earthy ground. Its inconvenience, however, consists in its having a strong side slope, so that a wheeled vehicle could hardly run along it.

We did the last 2 versts of road (1⅓ miles) in over an hour. Every 10 or 20 steps the horses stopped to take breath, then another 20 paces and another halt, and thus we moved on up to the saddle of the pass. We reached the summit at 10 A.M. According to Griffiths' calculation the elevation of this pass is 13,000 feet.

One would have expected, therefore, that we should have felt the usual consequences of the rarification of the air natural to the great height at which we now found ourselves. Hardly one of us, however, suffered either from shortness of breath or palpitation of the heart, not to speak of the other severer symptoms, such as bleeding at the nose, ears, or fainting, &c.

One of the Cossacks alone, who had an affection of the lungs, suffered severely; on reaching the top of the pass he fell down like a log on the ground; another Cossack too, who was exhausted by intermittent fever, experienced a little difficulty in breathing. I must remark, however, that the Cossacks ascended the pass on foot, and if they had ridden up on their horses, I do not know whether these two would have shown these signs of "mountain sickness" which I have just mentioned, or not. I counted the beats of my pulse and of that of several of the other members of the Mission, and found the average 84 per minute.

From the top of the pass a rather instructive view opens out over the surrounding locality. First of all you could see that many mountain peaks considerably exceed it in height. It was plain that both this as well as the Háji Khák Pass lying further to the west do not really run over the Hindu Kúsh (in the sense of a typical mountain range), but are a mountain knot uniting the Hindu Kúsh, whose snowy peaks were seen pretty far to the eastward of this, with the Kúh-i-Bábá range, which is quite separate from the Hindu Kúsh (again in the same sense). The Kúh-i-Bábá range commences 20 or 30 versts (13⅓ to 20 miles) south of the pass, with a triple-headed snowy peak, lying in the obtuse angle between the Áb-i-Giljatai, a stream rising at the foot of the Irák Pass, and the Helmand. Commencing at this triple peak, the Kúh-i-Bábá range extends in an uninterrupted snowy chain to the west-south-west. However, it is impossible to follow the direction of the Kúh-i-Bábá for any more or less considerable distance, as it soon hides itself behind the snowy peak of the Kálú Pass. The locality occupied by the Irák Pass is very hilly; hills, peaks, and mountain ridges are thrown together, without any order at all, over a large area. Defiles and narrow valleys intersect this locality in all directions. One must notice, however, that there are very few snowy peaks near the pass; the chief masses of snow are seen to the east and south-west of it.

On the summit of the pass a strong wind was blowing. Involuntarily we had to shorten our breathing. The temperature here was 68° in the shade. The descent from the pass has the same conveniences and incon-

veniences as the ascent. From the top of the pass to the Hazára fort of Kharzár is about 6 versts (4 miles). Here our halt was fixed for the night. There is nothing particular to be said about the road from the pass to this fort, which is at an elevation of 11,000 feet according to Griffiths ; I will only state that it is incomparably better than the road on the other side of the pass ; the gorge is broader, the road softer, and the stones fewer. Along the road and on the pass itself, only grass grows like our dactylis (*Dactylis glomerata*) which, according to the Afgháns, possesses strongly poisonous qualities. They take great care that in traversing this locality the horses and camels do not eat this grass ; this grass, according to them, kills both these animals, even if they eat the smallest quantity of it. But sheep eat it without injurious effects. About Kalah Kharzár fields of clover and barley again appeared. Wheat was not seen here at all. The barley at this time was just in ear : they cut the clover only once a year. The Hazáras here presented features more like those of Mongols than those we had met on the northern side of the Great Irák Pass.*

It appears that before the Russian Mission not a single European had crossed this pass. Our march on this day pretty well tired us out. It was consequently in no way surprising that on seeing our tents we all instinctively commenced to urge on our horses ; soon the shade of the tents sheltered us with their usual hospitality. The ready prepared breakfast left nothing to be desired. Our weary limbs really required a horizontal position and our nerves sleep. Almost all of us hastened to pay our dues to Morpheus. A most unpleasant *contretemps* had happened on the road to our " Naturalist." The box with his bedding had not yet arrived, and he had long to await the horned beast of burden which carried it. Why horned, I will explain directly. The fact was that our baggage horses, owing to the uninterruptedly difficult road, had become sensibly weaker ; the greater number of them had sore backs and rubbed flanks, so that nearly all of them were wholly unfit for further work. The Afgháns, to whose foresight we must give all credit, perceived this and had organised a bullock transport train for us. The bullocks proved themselves excellent workers, notwithstanding that they are not specially distinguished for their size here ; their humps are very well developed, their hair very smooth, and their legs very well shaped and thin. These cattle are distinguished by their good-tempered disposition, although not castrated.†" On the following day the road throughout the march ran along a stream. At about 3 or 4 versts (2 to 2⅔ miles) from Kalah Kharzár the road from the Háji Khák Pass came out on our right, and soon afterwards, also on the right of the road and at some distance from it, appeared the village of Giljatai. Here the stream Áb-i-Giljatai joined the Áb-i-Kharzár. By their junction a pretty large

* Dennie, however, crossed the Irák Pass.—Wood, Journey to the Source of the Oxus, Chapter LXVI. " The Irák Pass was that by which Brigadier Dennie crossed to Bámián in 1840, before fighting his action with Dost Mahomed on that famous site."

It is not known, however, which Irák Pass he crossed - the Greater or the Lesser. From the Kábul Valley one can reach Bámián, avoiding the Great Irák Pass, even though you cross the Lesser Irák Pass. To do this you only have to take the direction of the Shibar Pass.

† At a very distant period of time bullocks played the part of baggage animals in the Hindu Kúsh as well as they do now. Apollonius Tianus, who travelled here in the middle of the first century A.D., informs us that the practice of carrying loads on bullocks was habitual here. —Renaud, Mémoire sur l'Inde, page 84.

stream is formed which retains the first name. To the south-west of the village of Giljatai extends a rather broad mountain plain which ends on the south in the lofty peak of the Kúh-i-Bábá. This same peak was seen by us from the Greater Irák Pass. It is covered with eternal snow and serves as the commencement of the Kúh-i-Bábá range. In all probability Burslem ascended it and after him Lady Sale.*

Throughout the whole distance from the little village of Giljatai to Gardan-Diwár there is scarcely a single village. The route lies along the bottom of a deep ravine in which a hill stream rushes noisily along, splashing the neighbouring black rocks. We had to cross several times from one bank to the other, sometimes through the bed of the stream when the water came up to our horses' knees. Sometimes a smoothly polished road, like an artificially made pavement, extended along the bank of the stream. The surrounding rocks were lifeless and dead; not even thorn bushes were visible; very rarely the purple leaf of "chukri," almost entirely dried up at this season, glistened in the sun. This "chukri" or "rawásh" is nothing else than the rhubarb of Burnes.

Almost half way from Giljatai to Gardan-Diwár are some strongly impregnated iron springs, issuing from under shale rock. The water of these springs contains a large quantity of carbonic acid gas. The taste of the water is pleasant, slightly astringent and metallic; the temperature of the water was 52·9° F. About the springs which issue from the ground by 10 to 15 openings, a little oval mound of a rusty-red colour had formed, in all probability owing to the deposit of oxide of iron; unfortunately a chemical analysis could not be made for want of the necessary agents. Dr. Lord is the only one of all the English travellers who mentions these springs.†

After an hour's ride we reached the River Helmand. The Áb-i-Giljatai, along which we had been marching until now, falls into the Helmand almost at right angles. The direction of its course is from north-north-east to south-south-west, whereas that of the Helmand is from north-east to south-west. Our camp was situated on the cape formed by the upper (north) intersection‡ of the streams. The tents on this occasion were pitched on platforms prepared for them on the very bank of the river. To the south and west of the tents was water, on the north almost perpendicular cliffs, and on the east were undulating green fields sown with wheat and barley. On the opposite cape formed by the lower or southern segment intercepted between the Helmand and the Giljatai, at an elevation of several hundred feet above the stream, was Gardan-Diwár, the crenelated walls of which produce a rather suggestive impression on the traveller,—all the more so, that all round is a silent waste, and, if it were not for the fields round our tents, a lifeless desert. The fortress is occupied by a small Afghán garrison. Water is carried to it by a canal from the Áb-i-Giljatai; this canal, in order to raise the water to such a considerable height as that at which the fort is placed, must have commenced at several versts from it.

Both banks of the Áb-i-Giljatai are joined by a wooden bridge, but so old and weak that we decided not to cross it, but to ford the stream,

* Burslem, page 34.

† Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. VII, page 531, Dr. Lord's letter.

‡ That is, in the northern angle formed by the confluence of the two streams.—*Translator.*

notwithstanding that its breadth is here not less that 140 feet and the rapidity of the current very considerable. The River Helmand carries a pretty considerable mass of water. Its breadth here is from 70 to 115 yards, its depth from 3 to 5 feet. A wooden, tolerably solid bridge, is thrown across the river. The river is apparently not much obstructed with stones, although it is scarcely fit for navigation even by rafts, owing to the great rapidity of the current. I did not see a single tree here in this valley; one must say that the locality generally is very barren. The actual elevation of the fort of Gardan-Diwár, according to English data, is 10,000 feet. On the following day, the 26th July (7th August), we made a rather long and very fatiguing march. From the valley of the Helmand we crossed over into the valley of the Kábul-Darya.

Having crossed the River Helmand by the wooden bridge, we continued to march for a distance of about 2 versts (1⅓ miles) along its left bank. The road here lies along a low cornice. It then turns sharply to the south and runs for some time in a narrow defile, at the bottom of which flows a muddy little stream. Having marched about 2 miles in this manner, we again rode out into an open place, which soon commenced to rise in an eastern direction. A small, rather steep ascent, a descent, and we again found ourselves in a mountain hollow. The road was covered with boulders and stones of various size. On both sides of the road small patches sown with wheat, barley, and peas sometimes extended. At a distance on both sides, especially on the south, near the mountains, which loftily raised their snowy peaks above the mountain terrace still covered with patches of snow, were seen the typical fort-villages. Soon on our left a rather extensive village appeared. This was Yurt. All the plain near it is called by the name of this village. Yurt boasts of horses in its district who never weary, and also of its sheep. However, the locality is generally so poor that in truth it would not be difficult to boast of anything. In another more favoured locality these same horses and sheep would not be anything particular. As to the Hazáras who live on this lofty plateau (about 11,000 feet), they say that they are excessively daring robbers.

The locality then again commences to rise in an eastern direction, presenting a wide slope facing westwards. At certain intervals it is broken by rather deep and steep ravines, the exposed side of which show the presence here of primary rocks. The ascents and descents in them are very slippery, and in places consist, as it were, of polished granite flags. At the bottom of these ravines, which extend from south to north, there are generally streams flowing in the direction of the River Helmand. But here is the last ravine, and a steep but not long ascent leads us to the summit of the Unnai Pass, the height of which, according to Griffiths, is more than 11,000 feet. But not only should this be called the pass, which rises very little above the neighbouring terrace of hills, but the whole plateau contiguous to it. Thus the Unnai Pass consists of a very broad mountain terrace, intersected by ravines in a meridional direction. I define this pass in this manner because the projection which forms the so-called pass rises only very slightly above the surrounding locality. It forms nevertheless the water-parting of the Rivers Helmand and Kábul-Darya.

Then commences the descent to the Kábul Valley. It is at first very slippery and rather steep; but nevertheless there are here neither bottom-

less precipices on the side of the road, nor those cornices leading over precipices along which the path winds, as stated by Burslem.*

Along the road, however, stones and blocks of granite fall, almost blocking it in some places. Little by little the defile commences to expand, chiefly to the right of the road; sparkling streams soon appear, and a little further on fields commence.

On the right the valley becomes wider and wider at each step in advance; now the first little garden has appeared, though a small and dried-up one it is true.

Nevertheless the eye rests lovingly on its scanty foliage, for from the Irák Valley we had not seen a single tree. The right side of the defile still continues to preserve its sharp, rocky character, for some distance.

Here a group of mounted Afgháns came to meet us. Their leader was dressed in a curious but very effective dress of a green colour. On approaching Kemnáb, Muhammad Hussan Khán (the same as the Debír) and the horsemen dismounted, and respectfully welcomed him, as well as the Mission.

The Kemnáb gave him his hand, and then put his arm around his neck and talked with him long and cordially. After this the Afghán, with his group of horsemen, joined our escort. Soon after this the character of the locality again changed. The mountains approached each other here and formed a wild but very picturesque defile, the bottom of which was thickly covered with gravel and shingle. How sharp did the sound of the trumpet sound in this defile, and how the drum rolled, the sound of which resounded in a hundred-voiced echo in a manner quite incredible!

The locality through which we rode took a more and more romantic character. The granite rocks of the defile were picturesquely shaded by the thick vegetation of luxurious gardens; the pyramid-shaped poplar loftily raised its green top, vying in height with the neighbouring cliffs.

In places golden apricots peeped out through the green foliage, and the green branches of the willows on the edge of the joyous, ever-murmuring stream, bent down over the sparkling water. Sometimes, now on one side of the defile, now on the other, forts appeared on the heights, and these were here really deserving of the name.

We passed several villages, crossed several fields sown with wheat, the full and heavy ears of which were already ripe; crossed the stream several times by fords and once by a wooden bridge, and arrived at the camp of Sar-Chashma. This Sar-Chashma is the source of the Kábul River (*Sar*, head; *Chashma*, spring).

On a rocky eminence, a few score yards from our tents, a large crowd of the local inhabitants had collected. They sat motionless for several hours together, observing the new arrivals whom they had never seen before, and occasionally interchanging fragmentary remarks. Several boys with the agility of monkeys scrambled up the crags and rocky projections of the heights on which the inevitable fort showed itself. The gate of this fort, *i.e.*, simply a village surrounded with a low mud wall,

* Burslem, pages 25-26: "We soon entered the mouth of the pass, which was girt on either side by magnificent precipices; the road was narrow and slippery,—of course without even an apology for a parapet,—running along a natural ridge on the verge of a perpendicular cliff, and so sheer was the side that from a horse's back you might have sometimes dropped a stone into the apparently bottomless ravine—bottomless, for the rays of the noonday sun have never broken the eternal darkness of the awful chasm beneath.

was often opened and shut by the people passing through it, loaded with forage prepared for our horses. It was very probable that the supplies for us were furnished generally by this village. The Mission, during the time of its journey in Afghánistán, paid nothing for its supplies. Of course the Afghán authorities, in accordance with the usual customs of hospitality, common to all countries and nations, would not permit us to pay for our supplies.

The people seated on the heights and going in and out of the gates did not belong apparently to the Afghán family. Their shaven, square-shaped heads, their broad cheek-bones, flat noses, their eyes somewhat squinting inwards, at once placed them in the category of people belonging to Mongolian race. On enquiry it proved that these were Hazáras, of whom a great many live at the sources of the Kábul-Darya. Their language reminds one of Tartar, and the roots of the words are of Jagatai (Turki) origin. What a pity we could not become more nearly acquainted with this interesting people! Amongst Shír Ali Khán's troops there were many Hazáras, and his body-guard almost exclusively consisted of them.

About 4 P.M. the whitish clouds on the mountain tops situated to the east of us changed to dark ones. The clouds quickly grew into a black, threatening thunder-cloud, and immediately after loud claps of thunder were heard. The storm came in the direction of our tents, and we tasted in advance all the charm of this entirely unwished-for and not altogether pleasant rain-bath.

Our fears, however, were unfounded. The cloud passed quickly by us along the northern range of hills; only a few drops of rain fell in our camp; this was the first storm met with by us in the mountains of the Hindu Kúsh. The whole of the following day we had to traverse the beautifully cultivated valley of the Kábul River. Early in the morning, having as usual gulped down a cup of tea as quickly as possible, we were all in the saddle. We were sorry to quit such a charming, comfortable nook as Sar-Chashma, all the more so that the road for the first two versts inclined away from the river to the right, and we had to march these two versts through continuous heaps of shingle and sharp gravel. Our heavily-burdened ponies sank deeply in this mixture, and threatened finally to damage their weary legs. However, after this the road again ran through cultivated land, gardens, and fields. Sometimes the perpendicular cliffs of both ranges of hills again approached each other and contracted the valley. In some places we had to ride over low granite cornices. Three times we had to cross from one bank of the stream to the other; at these places there were always pretty substantial wooden bridges. They were, however, far inferior in durability and beauty to those bridges which we had seen in Afghán Turkistán. The latter would have done honour even to European countries. Pools of water soon began to occur along the road,—traces of the thunder-storm and downpour of the evening before. The gardens we had to pass through consisted chiefly of poplars, apricot and willow trees; chinárs occurred occasionally; crops of Indian-corn were to be seen in the fields. The well-grown stems of wheat, already in ear, were greedily catching the caressing rays of the sun. Further on, the walnut was added to the trees, and still further on vines appeared. At about 10 versts (6¾ miles) from our camping ground the valley suddenly became much wider, chiefly to the left

(north), forming an extensive bay. This apparently consists of an independent valley irrigated by a plentiful stream which here falls into the Kábul-Darya. But on the right, too, the hills receded and took a more rounded outline. The hills at this time presented a curious panorama. Their highest summits were covered with an impenetrable whitish fog. To their steep sides clung semi-translucent, soft clouds, constantly and capriciously changing their form and outline. Still lower down, the green mountain pasture land gave place to fields, whose irrigation channels extended along the slope in regular lines dividing the hill-side into several belts, one above the other. Groups of trees with "forts" under their shade looked, from where we were down below them, like toy houses, scattered over the emerald surface of the mountain giants. The fields descend in terraces right down to the river; each field fenced off from inundation, both by the river and by the mountain streams, with stone fences and dikes. Here not a single scrap of land fit for cultivation is allowed to lie fallow and uncultivated. The banks of the river and its miniature islands also were occupied exclusively with gardens, here just like woods. And over all this shone a clear blue sky, deep as an abyss, vast as infinity itself.

In our group, as I have said above, rode the commandant of the Hazáras of the Kálú district, Mír Bábá. His physiognomy greatly attracted my attention. I often looked at him with curiosity. Observing my curious glances, he began to smile, showing two rows of fine and brilliantly white teeth. Then he began to try and converse with me, but his attempts at conversation remained nothing but attempts; neither could I understand him nor he me, and there were no interpreters with us. Then we had to take to the universal language—common to all mankind—of signs. He shook his head, shook and moved his hands, slid about and jumped up and down in his saddle, but, all the same, our original style of conversation went on rather flatly. The General was good enough, with the help of the Debír, to translate to me something of what this descendant of Chengiz wished to say. He wished to tell me about the road, the valleys which lie in the neighbouring hills, and it appeared his garrulity would not have stopped if he had been able to continue the conversation any further. But here is the village of Koti Ashrú. Here the valley again contracts. The road runs along the left bank of the stream through a hilly locality; these hillocks are composed of conglomerate. We traversed the latter half of the road to Koti Ashrú quicker than the first. During the march I was not a little surprised by the fact that for a great distance the fields were sown with beans and peas, together with Indian-corn and rice. I cannot at all explain the partiality of the natives for these crops.

Along the road large caravans met us from time to time, going into the valley of the Amú-Darya, chiefly to Bukhára. Several versts before reaching our camp the Debír warned us that here the Minister of the Court of Amír Shír Alí Khán would meet the Mission, sent for the purpose from Kábul. After a few minutes' ride we saw that the Minister himself, accompanied by a suite of several men, was awaiting our arrival at a high chinár tree which overshadowed the neighbouring valley.

As soon as he saw the Mission he at once rode to meet us. He was a strong, tall old man of about 70, with white hair. His face was pleasant, with an open expression; his black eyes looked forth intelli-

gently and affably from under handsome eyebrows. His aquiline nose gave his face an expression of power and energy. On his breast flowed a beard, not very long, but white as snow. He was dressed in clothes of European pattern, and apparently of European material. A narrow leather belt, embroidered with gold, was round his waist, in which hung on his left side a long Kábul sabre, and on the right was a revolver of respectable calibre. On his head was the Afghán national head-dress, a fur, conical-shaped, high hat of black, soft Kárakol lambskin (Astrakhán). He was mounted on a powerful, very fiery, well-bred horse, of a golden colour. His saddle, bridle, and bit were undoubtedly of English manufacture. The name of this Sardár was Abdulla Khán.

Having exchanged the first salutations, we all of us went to the tents to which the vigorous old Sardár conducted us.

He passed a few minutes in our quarters, spoke of the journey before us, and informed us that at the next march the Wazír Sháh Muhammad Khán, the Afghán Minister for Foreign Affairs, would meet us.

Then tea was proposed, and the Sardár, having drunk his tea, took a decorous farewell of the Mission, wished us a pleasant rest after the fatigues of the march, and promised to come to us in the evening.

In the meantime the sky became again covered with cloud, and the summits of the northern range of hills were again clothed with moist dark clouds. In a short time claps of thunder rolled forth, then flashes of lightning brightened the sky, and we again prepared for a shower-bath. But this time also the heavens were gracious to us; the downpour came down to the westward about 10 versts (6⅔ miles) from our tents. There was, however, enough rain at our camp also to wet the ground well.

We were now on the northern edge of the Maidán Valley, well known for its fertility and the warlike character of its inhabitants. At the village of Koti Ashrú the valley is 6 or 7 versts (4 to 4⅔ miles) across, and, following the course of the Kábul River, inclines to the south-east, thus running round the last pass on the Kábul road, the Safíd Khák, which lies due east of the village. Here the northern slopes of the Hindu Kúsh (with reference to this valley, but in reality the southern) became much lower, and are far inferior in the sharpness of their outlines to the range of hills bounding the Maidán Valley on the south. These latter rise in an almost perpendicular wall from the verdant picturesque valley, whereas on the north, here and there narrow mountain hollows run in to the range of hills, shaded by gardens, groves, and green crops. The Maidán Valley forms, as it were, one enormous village, scattered over a space of many versts in length and breadth. The gardens of this valley are really woods. It is reckoned almost the chief granary of Kábul. The population here is very considerable, and must almost amount to 100,000 souls. Many Afgháns live here, but there are also Tájiks and even Hazáras.

In the evening, about 6 P.M., Sardár Abdulla Khán again came to us. The Debír seeing that I was playing chess with the Colonel, proposed to me to play a game with him. I did not refuse, although I might have expected that our game would not be confined to ourselves, and that the byestanders would prompt the Debír. This was what actually happened. After a few moves it appeared that three were already playing against me, amongst whom were Mossin Khán and another Afghán

Colonel. Abdulla Khán followed the game attentively. I, as usual, got angry,—especially on seeing this unequal contest,—made false moves one after the other, and was finally checkmated. Then the old man said that this mate was not really a defeat for me, but that, on the contrary, such a victory, gained by three adversaries against one, really constituted a defeat for the winners, "as they," said the Sardár "have suffered at this moment a defeat in magnanimity and hospitality."

It was pleasant to look at this vigorous and noble old man.

The conversation then turned to politics. The Sardár, amongst other things, said that the present time reminded him of the end of the thirties (1830 to 1840), when he met the Russian Ambassador Vitkevitch, who, during the whole time of his residence in Kábul, lived in his (the Sardár's) house.

"Even then," said the Sardár, "it was plain to us that only by alliance with Russia could we attain to peaceful development of the kingdom. The Amír Dost Mahomed Khán already saw that in Russia alone was there a barrier to be found against the all-devouring embrace of the English. It is true that Russia did not then help us in any manner whatever; however, we then thought that we could deal with our blood-enemies alone. Now the son of Dost Mahomed, Shír Ali Khán, invites you to visit him in Kábul as dear friends, messengers of peace and good. May Allah grant that our friendship may never give us cause for regret!" Thus spoke this energetic old man, and his face glowed with animation, and his fiery eyes showed that his words were spoken from the heart and with all sincerity. He spoke for some time longer on the same theme. The portrait of Dost Mahomed Khán in Burnes' book was then shown him. The Sardár praised the portrait greatly, and said that it was very like the late Amír. When he was informed that this book was written by the renowned Burnes, the political opponent of Vitkevitch, he said that he well remembered Burnes too—"a very ostentatious and egotistical man." "Vitkevitch was exactly his opposite," said the Sardár.

About 7·30 P.M. he wished the Mission good night (Shab-i-shuma ba-khair) and went to his own quarters.

On the following day, 28th July (9th August), we had to cross the last pass on the road to Kábul. This pass is called the Safíd Khák. The halting-place we arrived at is called Kalah-i-Kází; from it to Kábul is only 10 miles. We started as usual at an early hour. The road at first ran east with a trifling inclination now northwards and now southwards. It soon entirely left the cultivated belt of the valley and entered a locality slight hillocky, in places intersected by hill-streams, and covered with gravel and rather coarse pebbles. At about 5¼ miles from our halting ground at Koti Ashrú the rather steep ascent to the pass commenced. The ascent is by a not very narrow but rather slippery path worn in limestone rock. The whole ascent is 2 versts (1¼ miles) in length. The saddle-back of the pass consists of granite, and small pieces of mica, speckling the granite blocks, glitter in the sun. The descent from the pass is no less steep and slippery than the ascent. For some time during the descent the road runs through a narrow defile, which gradually widens out eastwards and leads into the Argandil Valley. Throughout the extent of the pass the locality was quite barren. Not a single tree or a single bush was seen anywhere.

In the valley of the Argandil vegetation again asserts its right. The valley is very well cultivated. It is continuously occupied with fields throughout its whole width of 3⅓ miles (from north to south), amongst which are prettily-studded villages, surrounded by shady groves of trees Thick-foliaged groups of gardens pleasantly vary the landscape. The road several times crosses various irrigation channels and brooks by fords; one stream is 70 feet wide, with 2 or 3 feet of water. The further east we moved, the more the valley widened out, so that not far from Kalah-i-Kází it attained a width of from 6⅔ to 10 miles. But here it did not present the same uninterrupted surface of green fields and gardens as at first; on the contrary, we had again to traverse for some time a perfectly unproductive locality, strewn with huge stones, in the vicinity of a dried-up bed of a river, also filled with stones, gravel, and shingle. On our left, 6 or 7 versts (4 to 4⅔ miles) distant to the north-east, was seen an extensive valley at a higher elevation, covered all over with gardens. On seeing this valley the Kemnáb went into ecstasies, and turning to me said, "Zardálu, shaftálu mewa bisyar, khaili khub dar anja." (The apricots, peaches, and various fruits are very numerous and excellent there.)

"Bisyar, khaili khub, Doctor Sáhib," he repeated several times.

I thought to myself that it would have been pleasanter to see all this for myself than only to hear accounts of it, although such very ecstatic ones. Now a strange group of mounted men appeared a few versts off; amongst them could be distinguished three figures of some huge animals. The Debír told us that these were "fílán," elephants, and that the Wazír Sáhib was riding on one of them to meet the Mission. We rode on quicker, and the distance between us and the elephants rapidly decreased. In a few minutes we could clearly distinguish the figure of the Wazír, seated on one of the elephants; now only a few score yards separate us from the huge beasts; now they have halted; the one carrying the Wazír knelt down, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Afghánistán descended to the ground by a ladder.

"Khúsh ámadéd, Khúsh ámadéd, General Sáhib" (welcome, welcome), said the Wazír in a hearty tone, turning towards the General and extending his right hand. Immediately afterwards he folded the General in his embrace, pressing him to his breast. He also welcomed the Colonel and myself in the same manner. Soon afterwards the remainder of the Mission came up to us; some of us were then mounted on the elephants, others rode along on horseback. The General rode on the same elephant with the Wazír. From here to Kalah-i-Kází was only 5 versts (3⅓ miles), and we were soon at our tents. Kalah-i-Kází is a small fort with vegetable plots and a garden round it. At some distance from it is a rather high hill, quite bare and surrounded with a stone wall on the south side; on this hill our tents were pitched. It would have been impossible to choose a better place for our camp, for an extensive view opened out on all sides.

The hills here recede very far apart, and the plain occupies a considerable expanse. To the east extends the valley of Chahár-deh, excellently cultivated, the gardens of which appeared from our hill to be an uninterrupted wood. These garden-groves extended to the foot of two peaks, or more properly of two high hills, between which lay the road to Kábul.

Kábul is 10 miles from here, and if it was invisible from our hill, it was only because the hill past which the road to Kábul runs, and upon the eastern and northern slopes of which the city stands, shut it out from our view.

Above and beyond these hills rose the rosy white summits of the Hindu Kúsh, decked with snow. To the north the valley touches the hill slopes, not very high here, but which soon rise to a considerable elevation. To the west the snake-like, winding path, is seen by which we had just come, and to the south the horizon is almost unlimited: only in the far distance, through the misty haze, some low hills are seen. Near these hills runs the road from Maidán to Ghazni. The Kábul-Darya, too, flows considerable south of Kalah-i-Kází, and running round the southern hill situated at the eastern end of the Chahár-deh Valley, enters a defile from the west, and then flows for some distance through the suburbs of the town.

The elephants knelt down at our tents and we dismounted; the Wazír at once conducted us to our quarters. I will not now enumerate the characteristics of the first Afghán official of Amír Shir Alí. I intend to do this later. I will now only say that he was a thin tall man, whose clothes (of European pattern) hung on him like on a clothes-peg. His lower lip and rather soft features produced an impression on the spectator not altogether favourable to him. But his black eyes looked frank, and the tone of his speech was hearty and breathed sincerity.

The Wazír spent several minutes in our tent, and wishing us a good rest—"Khub istaráhat kardan"—went to his own quarters.

For after-dinner dessert to-day a whole mass of various fruits had been sent by the Amír from Kábul; there were cherries, apricots, plums, various kinds of grapes, pears, apples,* peaches, white and purple mulberries, water-melons, and melons of various kinds. To this was added various kinds of pastry cooked in the Amír's kitchen. The abundance of the fruit did not surprise me, but the fact that some of them were met with at the same time as others, notwithstanding that they came to maturity at a different time of year. For instance, apricots lying alongside of peaches would be quite an unusual phenomenon for Táshkand. Malevinski at once obtained the seeds of some of the fruits, hoping to keep them to sow in Táshkand.

After dinner I, Malevinski, Benderski, and Zamánbeg went to look at the elephants, which were placed at the foot of the hill. There were three,—two females and one male. The male was not more than 40 years old; one of the females was about 60, and the other 100.

Not one of them had any tusks. The male had his legs chained, but not the females. To my question as to why the elephant was chained, the driver replied "that it was only necessary to prevent him going away; the females always remained with him, and would not stir a step without him." The male was, comparatively, not tall, scarcely over 10 feet† high, but the females were much taller. All three were bought by the Amír in India. Besides these, the driver said he had ten others, all now in Kábul.

‡ * * * * * *

* During the whole of my journey in Afghánistán I only met with apples in Kábul.

† Anything over 10 feet is a very tall elephant.—*Translator.*

‡ Description of elephants, their habits, and uses, follows here.—*Translator.*

In the evening the post came in from Táshkand. General Kaufmann added to his letter to the commandant of the Mission a short telegram received by him from St. Petersburg. The telegram stated that the Berlin Congress had finished its sittings. The chief articles of the peace concluded with Turkey were stated in the telegram to be as follows: The formation of Bulgaria as a vassal principality; the independence of Servia and Montenegro with their former boundaries, and 400 million roubles to be paid to Russia as war indemnity. General Kaufmann wrote as follows on the subject of the receipt of this telegram: "If the telegram is only true, it is a very sad one. In any case," continued he, "the Congress has finished its sittings." He then counselled the commandant of the Mission, in his negotiations with the Afghán Government, to abstain from decided measures, promises, &c., and generally not to go so far as would have been done in the opposite case, *i.e.*, in the case of a war with England threatening us.

In this letter several lines were written in cypher which the commandant determined to read afterwards in company with Colonel Rozgonov alone.

In the animated conversation which sprang up amongst the members of the Mission consequent on the arrival of the post, the General more than once repeated that he was very glad that such important news had been received so seasonably on the eve of the entry of the Mission into the Afghán capital.

This circumstance, *i.e.*, the receipt of this last post, was a most important one, as in the negotiations with the Afghán Government it gave the Mission quite a different *point d'appui*.

In the evening I had a very sharp attack of fever, and it oppressed me all night. I was violently sick several times, notwithstanding the considerable use of narcotics. I burned like fire the whole night. The journey to Kábul was before us for the next day. It was necessary to prepare ourselves for the ceremony properly, and here I lay bathed in perspiration with parched lips and thoroughly exhausted. At 7 A.M. on the 29th July (10th August) our camp began to make a move. There was noise and bustle all around. All collected very ceremoniously as if preparing for divine service. The Wazír soon appeared with his suite. About 8 A.M. we started. I felt very poorly; my head felt like a lump of lead, and I had constant qualms in my stomach and was sick. My legs refused to be of use to me. But there was nothing to be done; I had to get ready for the road too. I dressed somehow and mounted one of the elephants, presuming that I should ride more comfortably on one of them than on a horse, as I feared to fall from the saddle from weakness. When, however, the elephant's swaying motion commenced, I could scarcely endure it. Several times I determined to dismount from the back of the huge beast, but pulled myself together, forcing myself to think that "though the flesh is infirm, the spirit should be brave." However that may be, after some time I endured it so far as to be able to follow what was going on round me, and this was what was occurring.

The order of the procession itself was very effective. In front, several score yards from us rode a detachment of glittering Afghán cavalry. Then one after the other came our elephants, closed in by the Cossack escort.

Behind the escort was another detachment of Afghán cavalry. On

both sides of the cavalcade were two long lines of the Amir's guards, bold soldiers of tall stature. They were dressed in bright red uniforms.

Having crossed some fields, we soon reached a spot occupied by shady gardens. Plantations of tobacco and Indian-corn were sometimes seen. The wheat was already cut here. At the side of the road, at several places, groups of the natives were seen thrashing the wheat just brought from the fields. They thrashed it by the help of bullocks and horses, forcing them to walk over the sheaves placed on the thrashing-floor. At some points were heaps of wheat already threshed and winnowed, the amber grains of which glistened in the sun.

At 8 versts (5⅓ miles) from the last camp, the Mission was met by the Amír's own brother, Sardár Habíb Ulla Khán; he had ridden from Kábul on an enormous elephant of an ashy-grey colour. This elephant had huge gilded tusks, the ends of which were sawn off. A detachment of cuirassiers, armed with handsome Kábul sabres, accompanied the Sardár. On their heads they had glittering metal helmets with chains reaching to the lower lip. As soon as Habíb Ulla Khán came up level with us, he dismounted to greet the Mission. The commandant also dismounted from his elephant.

Then an exchange of seats took place amongst those riding on the elephants. The General rode with the Sardár on his elephant, the Colonel with the Wazír, and I with the Kemnáb. I now rode much more comfortably, as this elephant had a very smooth gait.

We then again continued our route. Large crowds of natives now began to collect along the sides of the roads, wishing to look at the new arrivals, even although "Faringis," but of quite another race.* These Faringis were Russians.

At 10 versts (6⅔ miles) from Kalah-i-Kází the environs of Kábul commence. Here one has to pass through a defile formed by the two hills I have spoken of above.

Formerly the defile was closed by a wall built of burnt brick. This wall, of which only the ruins now remain, rises in steps up both hills, and extends to their summits to north and south. I do not know where the northern part of the wall runs to, but the southern runs round the town on the west, turns south, and ends in the Upper Bálá Hissár, or citadel of Kábul.

The people collected in greater and greater quantities; they formed a dense living barrier on both sides of the procession. The neighbouring cliffs and projections of the hills, and the remains of the ruined walls, were all covered with various types of the inhabitants. The roofs of the houses, even the trees extending along both sides of the road, were covered by the curious.

There were seen Afgháns with bronzed skin, glittering eyes, and coal-black hair; here in the crowd might be also observed the Mongolian heads of the Hazáras, with narrow eyes and projecting ears.

Beyond the defile commenced the City of Kábul. We were now passing through its north-western edge. We had to pass through the street of a bazar, very narrow, but paved with stones, though very badly. From here paved streets commenced generally. Beyond, a *chaussée* began, and a very good one, fringed with trees on both sides, chiefly mulberry and willow.

* From the English.—*Translator.*

In a short time we came to a bridge over the River Kábul, here flowing from south-west to north-east. The bridge was stone, but in very bad repair.

The elephants forded the river, the depth of which was not more than 3 to 4 feet, with a breadth of 45 to 70 yards. The elephants slowly crossed the river, playing various pranks with their trunks, drawing in water and ejecting it again with great force. I momentarily expected some elephant to turn his trunk upwards and give his riders an unwished-for bath. But the drivers looked sharp after them, and no sooner did a driver see that an elephant had drawn up water in his trunk than he whispered something in his ear, and the giant at once began to flap his ears and immediately afterwards squirted out the water.

Immediately after crossing the river we turned from the road to the left, to the north of the town, and issued on an extensive field. In the centre of this field or plain stood Afghán troops of all arms. On both flanks cavalry was drawn up, and, in the centre, infantry; in front of these artillery was formed.

The number of troops was probably not more than a division. As soon as our elephants were level with the centre of the troops, the artillery commenced a salute; 34 guns were fired; after this the bands played and the troops marched past. The elephants again returned to the *chaussée* and went towards the Bálá Hissár, the walls of which stood out not more than a verst from us.

Then the mass of people, crowded on to the *chaussée*, raised shouts, and evoked the blessing of the four Caliphs on the Mission (corresponding to our complimentary "Hurrah"). Accompanied by the shouts of the populace, amounting to many thousands, and to the sound of music, we entered the gates of the Bálá Hissár. A guard of honour met us at the gates of the citadel, clothed in an original costume, consisting of check petticoats reaching to the knees, shoes and helmets.

After a short walk through narrow, partly-paved streets, closed in by two-storeyed houses, with windows looking on the streets, we reached our residence. The whole of the Afghán notables who were present accompanied us to our house.

CHAPTER IX.

In Kábul.

Quarters of the Mission in the Bálá Hissár—Reception of the Mission by the Amír Shír Ali Khán—National festival—Presents sent to the Amír by the Governor-General of Afghánistán—The Amír gives the Mission R11,000—Life of the Mission at Kábul—English papers received by the Amír—Reception of the post from Táshkand—Illness and death of the heir-apparent, Prince Abdulla Ján—Negotiations of General Stolietov with the Afghán Government—News of the equipment of an English Ambassador for Kábul—Refusal of the Amír—Family Bazar.

The elephants upon which we rode halted in rather a narrow lane at the gates of the palace set apart for the Mission. This lane divided our palace from the residence of the Amír. Wide gates, cut in a rather thick and lofty mud wall, led to the inner court of our residence, in which were the houses occupied by the native servants placed at the disposal of the Mission, and of the native officials of the palace. From here narrower gates led into the actual palace. At the first glance the whole building looked like a four-cornered box, surrounded on two sides by very thick walls, and on the other two sides built in with two wings. The quadrangle occupied an area of several hundred square sajénes.* We passed through the court of our palace, carefully swept and strewn with sand and fine gravel, and ascended a terrace in front of the north wing. The terrace was paved with burnt brick and occupied about one-fifth part of the whole area of the court. We then ascended to the second storey of the northern wing, where a ready-served breakfast and tea awaited us. The Kábulis apparently are very fond of fruit. For instance, even now for breakfast, whole mountains of fruit were served. I, however, was quite indifferent to breakfast, its surroundings, and the people round me. The burning of the fever kept on making itself felt. An animated conversation was going on between the members of the Mission and the Afghán officials, but I had not the energy to follow it. I only wished our hosts to end their official visit as quickly as possible, so that I might at once lie down on a bed. Then the Wazír, good man, addressed me in words of consolation, hoping that my fever would quickly pass off, and saying that it did not become a doctor to be ill.

Our hosts, however, soon made their bows and took leave. The Wazír wished to know when the Mission thought of presenting themselves to the Amír Sáhib, and added that it would be a good thing to rest after our journey. On this the General determined that the Mission should rest the whole of the next day, and would present themselves to the Amír Sáhib on the 3rd day, if it was agreeable to him.

As soon as our hosts had left, we all hastened to make ourselves at home in our extensive residence. The palace, as I have said already, was almost a square, two sides of which, the northern and southern, were occupied by buildings; the most extensive building was on the north

* 1 sajéne = 7 feet.

side of the quadrangle. It was built of unburnt brick, the outer face being made of wood. The house had four storeys.

* * * * * * *

In this building there were many rooms, but there were few which could be called comfortable in the European sense of the word: there was very little furniture, a few arm-chairs of clumsy make, a few common chairs and tables, covered with table-cloths, the product of English manufactories; native beds with rope bottoms instead of springs, and wadded mattresses instead of hair ones; this was all that there was inside the palace. There was not a single looking-glass anywhere. The rooms were not very small, rarely more than 28 to 33 feet long and 14 to 21 feet wide. The floors of the rooms were spread, some with Persian carpets, some with plain carpets, and some with flowered, soft, and thick Kirghiz felts. In some of the rooms the surface of the carpets was covered with white calico, also of English manufacture. The ceilings of the rooms were of the usual construction in Central Asia. They were made of reed-mats, put right over the rafters and lined underneath with cheap chintz. The walls of the rooms (by no means all, however) were pretty well plastered, and in some places embellished with simple sculptured ornaments in alabaster. Niches were let into the walls in which stood tea services, candlesticks, and other household articles. Stearine candles of English manufacture were stuck in the candlesticks. Having rapidly inspected the building I went to the south wing.

This was a double-storeyed wing, and its construction was the same as the other building. The second storey was much better built than the lower. The rooms here had a more comfortable appearance than in the northern wing. The particular superiority of this over the other wing consisted in the fact that its windows not only looked out on to the court, but, on the south side, on to the street also. Under the very windows of the south wing commences the extensive Kábul plain. From the height of the second storey of this building a magnificent view opens out over the southern and eastern environs of the town. The plain extended for a distance of about 7 miles to the south and east, and is bordered by low hills. The chief part of it is occupied by fields and meadows, especially the part nearest our residence. At the distance of a verst from our house was an extensive marsh, occupying an area of several square versts.

Further off, nearer the hills, at various distances from each other, were seen extensive villages nestling in the verdure of their gardens. To the east of the town, villages and gardens commence considerably nearer it than on the south side. Further to the east, 2 or 3 miles from the town, were seen the white tents of Afghán troops. Often afterwards we heard firing from that direction. Here the Afghán troops were practised at shooting. Almost from the walls of our residence three roads radiate over the plain: one to the east, one south, and the third south-west. This latter one passes literally under the windows of the south wing, along the foot of the hills lying west of the Bálá Hissár, and, running round them on the south, is lost to view. At 1½ versts from our house, in the middle of the meadows in the plain and on the edge of a large marsh, are seen a row of elephants; these were the elephant lines of the Amír. One could count eleven of them, but sometimes there were more. I chose a room in the south wing, in which some of the other members of the Mission also located themselves. The General occupied some rooms in the

second storey of the northern building. The Cossacks were placed in the lower floor of the southern wing.

The palace generally—although not resembling the eastern palaces, full of effeminacy and luxury, which are described not only in the "Thousand and one Nights." but in many Arab and Persian writers—still appeared to us excellent, and, what was the chief thing, pretty clean. The only dissonance to this cleanliness consisted in the tomb of some saint, as they said, of the Amír's family, which was in one corner of the court. Two or three dirty rags tied to poles, stuck on the tomb, rose above the enclosure of the late saint. The complete absence of vegetation about our residence struck the eye.

The Amír had resigned this palace, which up to this time had been occupied by his favourite wife and her suite, as a particular mark of respect to the Mission. But we did not all expect the palace of the Amírs of Kábul, formerly celebrated for their wealth and splendour, to be like this. We thought to see marble, guilding, the bright colours of varnished tiles, lapis lazuli, lavish fountains, magical gardens, &c., and instead of this we met with mud and a little grass, not a single tree, not a drop of water. The native servants brought a bed into my room and got it ready at once. This was, as I have said, the usual native bed and very broad. With the greatest delight I threw myself on to it, hoping to have a sweet rest. But my hopes were in vain. To the inward heat of the fever was added outward heat. The feather bed and wadded covering (razai) at once made themselves felt, and it seemed to me as if I was in a steam-bath and a heavy perspiration covered my exhausted frame.

The 30th July (11th August) was appointed as a day of rest for the Mission after its journey of more than 20 days, almost uninterruptedly. But it turned out otherwise.

About 12 o'clock on that day, the commandant of the Mission, dressing in full uniform, went to have an audience with the Amír Shír Ali Khán. He went alone, even without interpreters, accompanied only by the Wazír and an Afghán escort, informing the remainder of the Mission that they would not have to present themselves to the Amír, and that he would present himself alone. The General, however, quickly returned and ordered all of us to dress as quickly as possible in full-dress uniform. He informed us that the Amír wished to see the whole Mission in its full complement. I also dressed myself, notwithstanding my weakness, and started with the others. From our residence to the Amír's palace was only a few hundred yards. His palace was only separated from our house by a narrow lane and a few buildings intended for the servants. However, we mounted our horses and started riding. The Cossacks had their arms shouldered without their covers.

On riding out of the gates of our residence we at once turned to the right (west), went a little way down the road, leaving the wall of the Upper Bálá Hissár on our left, and the servants' houses of our palace on the right, and immediately halted at the gate of the Amír's residence. The gates were wooden and folding; they were let into a high mud wall.

At these gates we dismounted from our horses and entered a garden which commenced immediately at the gates. A wide, well-rammed path, bordered with barberry bushes, led us to a small building of very modest architecture. The building had two storeys. In front of it was an open

space with a stone reservoir filled with clear water. But even here there were no traces of a fountain. Round this space were planted poplar, chinárs, pear trees and vines; but on the whole the garden presented rather a sorry sight. The front part of the building was occupied by an open terrace. On this terrace, at the very parapet, cut out of stone, sat the Amír of Afgháníst'án, Shír Ali Khán. Putting our hands up to our head-dress, we went round the left of the basin, passed the terrace and ascended the terrace from the left by a staircase of several steps. As soon as we ascended the terrace, the Amír rose from his arm-chair, made two or three steps forward to meet us, and gave his hand to the commandant of the Mission. During this time the remaining members of the Mission were standing in a row with their hands at the salute. The Amír also acknowledged our salute by raising his hand to the peak of his helmet with which his head was covered.

After this the commandant of the Mission presented all the members to the Amír in turn. When Colonel Razgonov was presented to him, the Amír expressed his pleasure at seeing a Colonel of the Russian Czar and "a man who had grown grey with honourable grey hairs." Whilst the Mission was being presented to him, the Amír generally said something to each member, either a pleasant witicism or joke. Thus when Malevinski, "Inglesi terjumán" (English interpreter), was presented to him he asked, "Has not the Englishman brought fire in the skirt of his coat on this occasion to set fire to Afgháníst'án?"

"The English," continued he, "only come on to Afghán soil bearing the sword in the right hand and fire in the left."

It is evident that the Amír wished to make a pun, making use of the word "English," well knowing that Malevinski was Russian and not English.

During the presentation of the members of the Mission, the Amír gave his hand to each one and asked him to be seated.

He then conversed with us on various subjects for half an hour.

The Amír Shír Ali Khán had the appearance of an old, but yet very strong man, of at least 50. He was not very tall, and his thickset figure betokened strength and energy. His large black eyes looked out piercingly from under thick, slightly grey eyebrows. His aquiline nose gave a finish to the expression of his face, giving him a character of firmness. A large bushy beard, slightly grey, descended to his breast. He spoke in a sonorous, firm, and somewhat hoarse voice; the hoarseness was due to a cold, which he afterwards complained of, and asked my aid for. The metal helmet with ostrich feathers on the top did not become the Amír at all, as it covered his rather low forehead; it gave him the character of a savage ruler, parading in peacock's feathers. He wore a uniform of blue, with red braid across the right shoulder. The uniform was girded with a gold-laced sash; to the sash hung a sabre the hilt of which, richly ornamented with gilt damascening, of very fine work, testified in a certain degree to the worth of the blade itself; the hilt had no sword knot. On the breast of his uniform, which was worked in gold and silk, there was not a single order or any mark of distinction. His trousers were the usual General's trousers with red stripes.

The Amír talked a great deal about Russia with the commandant of the Mission; among other things, about the number of its inhabitants,

number of troops, amount of the revenue, &c. He also asked whether there were railways in Russia. Having received a reply in the affirmative, he asked if there were any in the Turkistán province also. It was generally observable that the Amír wished to ascertain as much as possible about the country with which he wished to conclude a friendly alliance. In front of the terrace were drawn up our Cossack escort with their arms at the "present." The Amír enquired about the Cossacks and wished to see the rifle exercise, which was carried out by the Cossacks, under Nazirov's word of command, to his evident satisfaction. Then the Amír wished to inspect a Berdan rifle, and one of the Afghán Colonels standing by the balustrade outside the terrace at once brought one. The Amír at once, without any explanation from the members of the Mission, cocked and let down the cock of the rifle, saying that its construction was partly known to him. He then gave the rifle back and ordered his breech-loaders to be brought. I do not know of what system they were, but remember that Colonel Razgonov spoke approvingly of them. The Amír then explained that these rifles were made in Kábul by Afghán mechanics and entirely by hand labour. There are no machines in the Kábul rifle manufactory.

I do not know how long our visit lasted in this manner, but suddenly a wind sprang up, changing afterwards into a regular hurricane. A dust-storm commenced filling the whole garden and soon reached the terrace. The Amír then concluded the audience.

We returned home in the same order, accompanied by the Wazír and the Kemnáb. I must remark that during our audience, of all the Afghán officials, only these two were present. The dust-storm increased to such a degree that after a few steps nothing could be distinguished. The wind at the same time was quite hot.

It was only after an hour that the dusty gloom dispersed and the sky again became clear.

On the morning of the 31st July (12th August) I was awakened by a sharp shock of earthquake, shaking the whole house. It happened about 8 A.M. Soon after the first shock, a second followed still sharper than the first. The house shook to its very foundations. How great the shaking was, may be judged from the fact that the beams and glass in the windows began to crack, and everything in the room was in danger of being thrown down. This, however, ended the earthquake, and it was not repeated.

The Wazír afterwards told us that earthquakes were not at all unusual in spring and the beginning of summer; at the present time of the year they rarely occurred. Earthquakes here are generally not severe; sometimes, however, but very rarely, there are very severe earthquakes accompanied by considerable damage. Some of the members of the Mission expressed a desire to go out walking in the town, but received the usual veto from the commandant of the Mission.

On the 1st August (13th August) the General went to the Amír alone. The Wazír and Mossin Khán, who again appeared, alone accompanied him. During the last three days Mossin Khán had hardly been seen at all amongst us. The Kemnáb, too, rarely came, and then only for a few minutes.

On the evening of this day the town was illuminated, and we admired it from the roof of the southern wing. The Kábulis let off rockets,

burnt Bengal fire, and in some places monograms were seen in fire. On the near-lying hills bonfires were seen, placed at various distances from each other. The illumination continued for about an hour. The Wazír did not fail to inform us that the illumination was made by the people in honour of the arrival of the Russian embassy.* This statement was in fact a very important one, for it showed that not only were the people not hostile to the Russian Mission, but that they were very pleased at their arrival. For the first time they showed very plainly marks of their respect for it. For a commencement, this was very good. On the following day the General again went to the Amír. On this occasion he went to present the presents sent by the Governor-General of Turkistán to the Amír. These presents were, to speak openly, beneath all, even the most indulgent, criticism. They comprised the following things:—

(1) A walking stick, thickly studded with turquoise, as if it was in a turquoise case, with garnets on the handle. Do not be agitated, reader, at the words "thickly studded with turquoise." These are the local turquoise, the so-called Kokhand ones, and of very little value. The work on the stick was also native, done by the Sarts, and by no means fine. This stick was valued in Táshkand at 600 roubles (about 950 rupees).

(2) A turquoise belt, silver buckles, gold clasp, valued at 400 roubles (about 630 rupees).

(3) Some pieces of brocade. The load with these pieces was only opened in Kábul and displeased us all with its contents. The brocade was of very average quality, and could by no means bear comparison with Indian. However, the agent who bought it (Nicolaev) said that 50 to 100 roubles the arshin was paid for it (34 to 68 rupees the yard, more or less). Besides this, the pieces were of very limited quantity.

(4) Several robes, brocade, velvet, and—horror!—cotton, trimmed with one or two rows of lace. The load with these was also received from the agent and not opened until we reached Kábul.

It is needless to say that its contents perturbed us no less than those of the preceding package. Fancy sending as presents for the Amír, the ruler of an extensive country, and in addition a man who had been in India and knew the value of such things, simple cotton robes!—such robes as are usually given by district commanders of the Governor-General of Turkistán to village Ak-sakáls! I do not really know what to liken such an act to.

These were all the presents. It was evident that such presents could not be suitably offered to the Amír on behalf of the embassy. It was necessary to arrange something and set this ugly story of the presents straight.

The commandant of the Mission arranged it in the following manner. He took his three best horses, given him by the Amír of Bukhára, ordered them to be saddled with the effective saddles, also given by the Amír, with the brocade saddle-cloths over them. The bridles were set with turquoises, with buckles of coral on their foreheads.

* It was of course done by order of the Amír, and was not a spontaneous ebullition of feeling as apparently supposed by the author—*Translator.*

This formed, though not a very valuable present, yet an effective one which took the eye.

Then the General took the best of the robes also given him by the Amír of Bukhára at Karshí. There were real brocades with gold embroidered flowers and also real Cashmeres—all presents from the generous ruler, our neighbour.

After this there were added to the presents the following things: A Berdan rifle, infantry pattern, with bayonet attached; a Berdan rifle, cavalry pattern; an excellent Lancaster rifle; also a revolver of Smith and Wesson's, No. 2 pattern. All these arms belonged to various members of the Mission. To all this was also added two silver services for tea and dessert.

The presents were made up in this manner, but in truth would not have cost more than four or five thousand roubles, but they were pretty numerous in quantity. Although our General had told the Amír at our first audience that our country was vast and abundant, but poor in money, nevertheless it ought to have sent the Amír richer presents. It is clear that presents, and valuable ones, should have been sent, but not money. This I think requires no explanation; it explains itself.

The next day the Wazír came to our residence at the head of several men bearing some trays on their heads, covered with brocaded covers. He came into our general room, where we usually dined, drank tea, and collected to talk, &c., and commenced the following speech:—

"General Sáhib! The Amír Sahib sends to you and to all the persons under your command, both high and low, and also to all the Cossacks, "jigits," and followers, his salaam. And by me he sends to the messengers of the great Monarch these small presents and requests you not to refuse, but to accept them." After this he ordered the trays to be put upon the floor and took off the covers. On the trays lay eleven little bags, apparently with money.

The General in an agitated manner asked, "What is this?"

To this question the Wazír replied that on the trays was ₹11,000 in Afghán money.

Then the General was not slow in protesting against such a present, saying that amongst us Russians it was not allowed either to give money as presents nor receive it from any one whatever, that consequently the Amír's present could not be accepted, but that the Wazír should express the acknowledgments of the Mission to the Amír for his attention to them.

The Wazír, however, could apparently not at all understand why such a present could not be received by the Mission and consequently stuck to his point.

"Amongst us," he said, "if the Amír Sáhib loves any one and wishes to honour him, he gives him a present in money, if at the time he has money, or else, but more rarely, various other things. Now, however, the Amír Sáhib can give the Mission nothing except this insignificant sum of money." The General continued to refuse, saying that with Russians it was not the custom to receive presents of money. Finally, the Wazír insisted that the English, when the Amír Sáhib was amongst them as a guest in India, also gave the Amír a present in money or chiefly in money.

The commandant of the Mission, however, continued obstinately to

refuse; he asserted that the acceptance of such a present would be looked on unfavourably in Russia; that the Mission required no presents, &c.

The Wazír, however, stood to his colours. "What the Amír Sáhib has sent," said he, "I do not even dare to call a present. This is nothing but fruit money. It appears that, even in Europe, it is the custom to give foreign ambassadors money for some of their expenses. Why does the Russian Mission not wish to receive money from my lord? I know that by refusing to accept this trifle you will greatly mortify the Amír Sahib, and he will certainly consider himself insulted."

Then the commandant of the Mission at last decided to accept this present, which was in no way desired by us, and there and then expressed his intention of expending the money for the benefit of the native charitable institutions. I think, however, that the General would have met with no less difficulties in carrying out his intentions than he had in altogether refusing to accept this money, for although in Afghánistán there exist a ministry, schools, posts, and even printing presses, yet no charitable institutions exist on this virgin (from a civilised point of view) soil.

During several days these eleven little sacks lay in one of the niches in the wall as if neglected, but afterwards they were taken to a proper place and used for an object which had nothing to do with charity.

We soon ascertained that the Amír received from India daily and weekly English papers. As we received no Russian papers, this was the only way of ascertaining what was going on in the world. Consequently M. Malevinski expressed a wish to the General to make use of the English papers received by the Amír. The General told the Wazír of this wish, and in a day or two we received some numbers of a paper published at Allahabad. This paper was called "*The Tribune of India*;" the numbers were from the 10th July (22nd July). From this paper we learnt, amongst other things, that the English sharply followed the journey of the Russian Mission to Kábul; the last news about it in the paper was on the passage of the Mission over the Amú-Darya. In a leading article they rather airily expressed an opinion that the Russians would not succeed in getting further than Mazár-i-Sharíf, that the Amír Shír Ali would not receive the Mission at Kábul, &c. In the paper they also announced the death of the Governor of Afghán Turkistán, Sardár Shírdil Khán, who was called "one of the most devoted friends and servants of the Amír."

From this paper we also learnt the Convention concluded between England and Turkey, the result of which was to secure to the English, or rather to Lord Beaconsfield, the Island of Cyprus. About the Berlin Congress they spoke, as one might have expected, as of one of the most glorious acts of the English premier. The sittings of the Congress were quite finished; about the despatch of an Ambassador to Afghánistán they did not say a single word. As a curiosity I may state that the commandant of the Mission was called in the paper General Abramov, the Governor of Samarcand. I must remark that General Abramov had left Samarcand two years before the Mission started, and was at the time the Governor of the Ferghána province. To see such a mistake obstinately repeated for a long time in an English paper was rather strange, as the accuracy of the English is well known, and they followed the Mission very attentively step by step.

The papers were a considerable relief to the monotony of our existence from day to day within the four walls of our residence.

On the 3rd (15th) August I had almost my first medical practice in Kábul—a very important but, alas! a very sad case.

About 4 P.M. the commandant of the Mission called me to him and ordered me to prepare to go out as quickly as possible. At the same time he told me that the youngest son of the Amír, and heir-apparent, Abdulla Ján, had been suddenly taken seriously ill. In consequence of this the Amír had asked the commandant for the aid of the Doctor of the Mission, and that I was now to go to the sick prince. Taking with me the travelling medicine chest, both interpreters and the apothecary, I went to the appointment.

Supposing that the prince lived in the Amír's house, I did not order the horses to be saddled, and so we started on foot. It appeared, however, that the prince lived in another house—quite separate from that of his father—which was in the centre of the town. We thus had to traverse the town for at least a verst.

Our road at first lay through the Amír's garden. From it we passed through the western gates and issued from the Lower Bálá Hissár. Beyond the gates is an extensive open space, which at the time appeared very empty; then we went on in a westerly direction for about a quarter of an hour through a rather crowded street, bordered on each side by occasional fruit trees; here there were numerous shops to which many people were crowding. I did not meet with even the slightest sign of ill-will from the people, nor was one sour look cast upon us Europeans. Simple curiosity was imprinted on the faces of the inhabitants who met us. Some of the people saluted the Wazír, who was walking with us.

We then stopped at a gate in a mud wall, locked on the inside. The Wazír knocked, said a few words to the porter, and the door opened; part of the Afghán escort accompanying us remained in the street at the gates, and the remainder entered the court with us.

The court was a small rectangle, surrounded on all sides by mud walls; along the walls I perceived several palanquins, closely covered over. Around these palanquins were a crowd of attendants. We passed through a narrow wicket in the western wall of the court, and came out in a small square, from which a stone staircase led us to a small pavilion, 50 feet long and 30 feet wide, and built on a high base. It was supplied with European windows, very small, with glass in them.

The inside of the pavilion, however, did not by any means harmonise with the outside; there was not a trace of furniture in it. In the centre of the room—for the pavilion only consisted of one room—was seen a group of people surrounding a bed. Upon this bed lay the sick prince to whom I was to afford medical aid.

He was a youth of 16 years of age, as those surrounding him informed me, but looked still almost a child, thin and weak. He lay on a bed. A fat man, with an observant look, was supporting his head; this afterwards proved to be the native court physician of the Amír, the "Akhúnd." The sick youth's eyes were closed, he breathed heavily and stertorously, and groaned slightly. First of all I asked those surrounding him about his illness. To my question, "What is the matter with him, and how long

has he been ill?" &c., I received the reply that he had been ill for 40 hours; that he had been taken with palpitation of the heart when in the Kohistán; that they had brought the sick prince from the hills into Kábul and given him some remedies, &c. After this I commenced to diagnose his case.

My diagnosis gave the following results. The sound of his breathing was not clear, stertorous, and, as it were, hard. The tones of the heart could hardly be distinguished, and were accompanied by noise. The beat of the heart was pretty strong, and at the same time of the character which in technical language is called "diffuse." The pulse was very weak—about 100 beats per minute. The stomach was very painful to pressure; a by no means strong pressure evoked groans of pain from the sick youth; it was much distended with flatulence. In the lower part of the stomach a dull sound was perceived on its being struck. The sick person was in an unconscious state and sometimes delirious. I could not measure the temperature of the body with the thermometer, but it was high to the touch. These symptoms were sufficient for me to see the chief gravity of the disease did not by any means consist of the "palpitation of the heart" which the native doctors pointed out, as the chief symptom of the disease, but disturbance in the stomach. It was also evident that not only was the mucus membrane of the intestine in a state of disease, but it was also highly probable that there was in this case inflammation of the peritoneum. Having made this diagnosis, I did what probably any other doctor would have done in my place. Inwardly I gave a preparation of opium and prussic acid, and outwardly I applied ice. Local bleeding could not be resorted to, as there was no possibility of obtaining leeches. Having passed about two hours at the sick boy's bed, I had to go back and inform the commandant of the Mission of the sick youth's condition. Towards the end of my visit the prince became a little better. We returned by the same way.

On reaching home, I informed the General of the very dangerous condition of the sick prince.

At 7 P.M. I again had to go to my patient. Just then a messenger arrived from him with the information that the prince, who had been easier during my presence with him, had again begun to feel worse. On reaching the prince's house (this time we rode), I looked at the prince's vomit and found in it completely uncooked little pieces of fruit, seeds, and grain. When I asked what they had fed the sick person with, I received the reply that not long before my arrival and without my authority they had given him stewed apricots.

The patient presented the same appearance generally as on my first visit. Now I remained with him until 10 o'clock. The prince apparently again became easier, and as I had the orders of the commandant not to remain in the pavilion for the night, I had to return to the residence of the Mission. The return took place by torch-light, for in Kábul no street lighting exists. The unfortunate prince was not fated to see the morning of the following day. He died almost in my arms when I went to him for the third time at 12 o'clock at night.

On the following day the General again went to the Amír. He expressed to the Amír his condolences for his irreparable loss. Notwithstanding that Shír Ali Khán had lost his heir-apparent, he bore himself very bravely, and said with apparent firmness that his affliction was a

very heavy one. "But what can I do? God gave, and God has taken away again," said he, repeating the well-known biblical phrase.

We heard scarcely anything about the prince's funeral,—that is, we only heard that he was buried very unostentatiously, quietly,—in fact almost secretly.

After this event the project of the Afghán-Russian convention was changed with reference to the points concerning the order of the Afghán succession. Instead of the paragraph "The Emperor of Russia recognises Abdulla Ján as the heir-apparent of the Afghán throne" was written "The Emperor of Russia recognises as heir-apparent whoever may be selected by the Amír Shír Ali Khán." Soon after this the Amír received an intimation from the Anglo-Indian Government of the intended despatch of an embassy to Kábul. The English authorities requested the Amír to receive their embassy "according to the customs of hospitality as a good neighbour of India should do."

This information was most unwelcome.* The Amír, after his difference with the English in 1876, did not at all expect such an embassy from them. It will be understood that, under the present circumstances, he did not wish to receive the embassy in Kábul, and in general did not wish to have any relations with the Anglo-Indian authorities. The Amír's reply is well known. He did not, however, give a direct refusal, but urged, as the reason for refusing, mourning for his son. But the English were not caught with this bait and continued to insist energetically on the reception of their Mission in Kábul. After this the Amír clearly expressed his inability to receive the English embassy at Kábul.†

Whilst General Stolietov held *pourparlers* with the Afghán Government, the remaining members of the Mission sat within the four walls of their palace and indulged in unjoyous reflections. Not a step beyond the gates of their quadrangle! It was very wearisome thus to sit here, and why should we do so? For had not the Afgháns—not only the ruling powers, but the populace—received us well?—consequently we had nothing to fear from the celebrated hatred of the Afgháns to Europeans, so much spoken of by English writers on Afghán fanaticism. Besides, the English in this case, in speaking of the hatred of Afgháns to *Europeans*, have intentionally or unintentionally fallen into a simple clerical error. They should have spoken of the hatred of the Afgháns to the *English* and not to *Europeans*, for (*1stly*) the English are all Europeans; (*2ndly*) the Afgháns, until the arrival of the Russian Embassy in Kábul, had never seen any other Europeans except English. It was for the English voluntarily to nourish, so to speak, in the Afgháns a feeling of hatred to "Faringis" (European-English). The statements of Elphinstone, Burnes, and some other English authors, clearly say that at the commencement of their acquaintance with the English, the Afgháns nourished no hostile feeling towards them. This hatred only showed itself after the campaign of the nominee of England, Amír Sháh Súja, in 1838-39; and finally this hatred increased after the catastrophe of 1841, which was caused by the early English administrators, commencing

* Literally, "fell like snow upon the head."—*Translator.*

† I must, however, remark that the Amír Shír Ali Khan, before his final answer to the communication of the English Government, applied for advice to General Stolietov, asking how he should act in the case. General Stolietov advised the Amír not to receive the English Embassy in Kábul

to administer Kábul and the Afghán kingdom according to their own pleasure. This hatred was strengthened still more in the Afgháns by the senseless, wholly unjustifiable revenge of 1842—a revenge in which the English rivalled, if they did not surpass, the ancient Vandals.

As the reader sees, there were not a few causes for this hatred towards the English springing up in the Afgháns. It was not without a cause that the word "Ingliz" (English) became an insulting and shameful one to an Afghán.

The past of the Russians with reference to the Afgháns was quite different. Here there were no blood-accounts to settle. The Russians were always honored by the Afgháns. Even a Russian church was respected by the Afgháns, as the Englishman, Dr. Gerard, bears witness to.* Up to the present time the Afgháns have known nothing but good of the Russians; they knew that Russia was a great and glorious nation, that the Russian people were magnanimous, kind, and indulgent even to conquered nations of a different faith and race. Russian Turkistán lies close to Afghánistán, and the prosperous condition of the natives conquered by us, and secured to them since the time of the occupation of the Khanates by Russia, is too well known not to be patent to the eyes of every inhabitant of Central Asia, and not to be recognised in even the most out-of-the-way corners of Central Asia, and all the more so of Afghánistán.† *Ergo*, the Afgháns not only could have no hatred for us Russians, but would not even be badly disposed towards us. One therefore now asked oneself why it was necessary to sit within the four walls of our palace, and thus to subject ourselves to voluntary incarceration.

To justify this sedentary state of ours the General adduced the following reasons: "The Amír has repeatedly told me," said he, "that probably there are numerous English spies and agents hidden in Kábul and generally throughout Afghánistán. Naturally it would be very pleasing to the English if anything inopportune happened to the Russian Mission, and the appointed English spies and agents, who are very well paid, are always watching their opportunity. If any insult were offered to the Russian Mission by these agents, it would cast a shadow on the friendly relations now entered into with Afghánistán, and the Amír prizes these friendly relations, now entered into with Russia, too much to risk this. This is why he advised the Mission to be on their guard as much as possible with reference to the population."

It may very likely be the case that the Amír's fears were well-founded. I will not criticise these protestations, as the subsequent events, recounted in my second volume, themselves direct the reader to the requisite criticism.

In the meantime many native sick commenced to come to me for medical aid. Ludicrous incidents used sometimes to happen between me and my patients. These were caused partly by my imperfect knowledge of the language. The interpreters of the Mission under these circumstances, it is needless to say, did all they could. I will let the reader judge from the following fact. Once a native came to me. By questions to the patient, carried on through an interpreter, it appeared that he had

* Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal, Vol. II.

† Curiously enough, we do not hear this panegyric from native sources.—*Translator.*

rheumatism in the muscles of the back and waist. I at once arranged for the apothecary to rub the affected parts of the body with a mixture of iodine. The apothecary conscientiously carried this out. At the end of the operation, it turned out that it was not this native who was sick, but his *mother* who was left at home. Cases in which healthy persons came for advice for their sick relations and friends left at home, were by no means rare. Naturally nearly all these were unprovided with remedies, for no doctor having a respect for himself and his science will prescribe for persons he has not seen.

I would in these cases have willingly gone to see the sick in their houses, in order to afford them assistance to the best of my knowledge and means; but the political veto extended even to acts of mercy. I also much wished to inspect the native dispensary, which they told me was well built and did not look at all like a common drug-shop. I wished, but kept silence.

The diseases which came under my observation here were the following: Fevers, rheumatism, catarrhs of the mucous membrane, of the conjunctive membrane of the eye; diseases of the nervous system (neuralgia, one case of epilepsy), skin diseases (eczema). The material generally was not very rich (from a scientific point of view), but more could not be collected. I was only in Kábul twelve days in all.

On the 8th (20th) August after dinner the commandant of the Mission informed us that we might prepare to walk in the Amír's gardens. Naturally this proposition was received by us with the greatest delight, for it was our first walk in Kábul! Burnes and Masson greatly praise the Amír's gardens, and these gardens are placed outside the town, consequently we should have to pass through the whole town, perhaps through the bazar. This would be capital.

A bitter disappointment, however, awaited us. We went on foot, some in our white uniform coats, some in cloth; the General was in full uniform with his orders on. The circumstance that we started on foot was itself a bad omen. If the Amír's gardens had been the object of our walk, we should have had to go on horseback, as the distance from the Bálá Hissár to the gardens is considerable.

We went about a hundred paces from our palace and halted in front of the closed doors of the already well-known residence of the Amír.

The doors were at once opened, and we, with the Wazír at the head and Mossin Khán at the tail, entered the dried-up little garden in which was the palace of the Amír Shír Ali Khán.

We halted at the tank and some arm-chairs and chairs were at once brought from the rooms of the Amír. Some time passed, and then it became plain that further than this little garden we were not to go,—that this was to be our walk in the Amír's garden. The Wazír quickly sent for tea, and fruits and sweetmeats made their appearance on a table-cloth spread on the ground. We all thought that the Amír would come to us and pass the evening with us; but he did not favour us with his company. Soon only the Wazír with the General and Colonel remained over the dessert; the remaining members of the Mission scattered to different corners of the uninviting garden. This garden was conspicuous for the almost complete absence of fruit trees,—a few apricots, peaches, and pear trees, and that was all. To these we must add two barberry walks and a small dried-up vinery. Vines apparently grew without any help from man.

Formerly this vinery was probably a very fine one; the dried stumps of vines 1 foot in diameter still remained. There was no fruit on the vine. There were also no peaches; the apricots were poor; the pears, it is true, were of very good flavour, but there was very little fruit on the trees. Mossin Khán informed us that this pear was called the Samarkand pear, and was considered the best in Kábul.

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About 7 P.M. we returned from the garden to our residence. On this same day we received the post from Táshkand. Amongst other things General Kaufmann informed General Stolietov that he had received a telegram from the War Minister in which the Turkistán Government were ordered not to make an offensive movement with the detachments collected in the Alai, Jám, and at Petro Alexandrovsk. Further, the Governor-General informed him that he expected orders to disperse the detachments and send back the troops to their winter quarters.

Referring to political events in Europe, the Governor-General wrote that he had received a private telegram in which it was stated that Bátúm was allotted to Russia at the Berlin Congress, but that, on the other hand, England had occupied the Island of Cyprus.* Montenegro was to remain within its former limits.

Nothing was said in the telegram about Bulgaria and Servia.

Further, the Governor-General apologised for not sending papers for the Mission by the post, but according to him this was owing to the fact that at Táshkand they were without papers in consequence of the bad order of the post road on the line of the Syr-Darya. This interruption was caused by the usual summer floods on this river.

On the following day the commandant of the Mission went to the Amír, accompanied by M. Malevinski. At the Amír's Malevinski met some Kází, Abdul Kádir,† who afterwards played a most important part at the Court of Shír Ali Khán. This Kází, an emigrant from Pesháwar, some years before had been in the service of the East India Government. For some reason or other the obscurity connected with him, even afterwards, remained unexplained. He left the English service, and suspecting, as he said, an attempt on his freedom by the English, he left India for Kábul, and had now lived for some years at the Amír's Court. This Kází spoke English excellently; he usually carried on the Amír's English correspondence, read him the English papers received in Kábul, and generally enjoyed, as it appeared, the full confidence of the Amír.

Naturally Malevinski and the Kází talked to their hearts' content in the piping‡ language of the islanders.

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Both I and the other members of the Mission wished very much to make ourselves acquainted with the staples of native trade. Burnes speaks in such terms of praise of the local bazars, of the ever-struggling motley crowd of buyers and sellers in them.

In his book "Kábul" he gives a detailed summary of goods imported into Kábul from India and Russia. It would have been interesting to verify Burnes' data. It would not have been less interesting to make

* This we knew already from the Anglo-Indian papers.

† He afterwards did good service under Sir Lepel Griffin at Kábul.—*Translator.*

‡ Why this I don't know. In original "bird-like."—*Translator.*

ourselves acquainted with products of Indian and also of Cashmere manufacture. The celebrated Cashmere shawls, we heard, were sold here at a comparatively cheap rate. It was impossible, however, to go to the bazar with this object, as there could not even be any question about it, owing to the reasons known to the reader. The Wazír, however, promised to form a miniature bazar in our palace itself.

On the 9th (21st) August some Afghán merchants brought some bundles of various goods into the court of our "mud quadrangle," and in a few minutes a small bazar was formed. The merchants were all pure Afgháns. With them came the Wazír and Kemnáb Muhummad Hussain Khán.

First of all the merchants spread out on tables the bundles of Cashmere shawls, amongst which there were several kinds. I think it is no use my describing them, as these shawls are well known to Europeans, sometimes under their own name and sometimes as Turkish shawls. Some of them were of very fine pattern, but yet there were few of them remarkable for the fineness of their texture.

There were here none of those fabulously fine shawls which, according to rumour, will almost pack into a thimble. The cost of one of these amounted to from ₹150 to 400.

The General bought six shawls of various kinds.

After this followed Indian brocades and satin materials. The price of these varied from ₹5 to 50 the arshín (=2⅓ feet). The General also bought several pieces of these materials. After this the merchants brought in native Kábul manufactures: fur cloaks, fur pelisses, slippers, and other trifles. The General bought several fur coats (postíns), and also slippers which were richly sewn with gold. After this riding materials—saddles, bridles, saddle-cloths—were brought into the room improvised as a bazar. These were all of English make, and the cost of a saddle was from ₹120 to ₹175.

These were all the articles in our bazar. For all the things bought the General paid a good sum of money. Several sacks of rupees, out of the ₹11,000 presented by the Amír, passed into the sinewy hands of the Afghán merchants.

All the things bought were intended, according to the General's statement, for the Táshkand museum as specimens of Afghán trade.

The Mission soon began to sicken again with fever. Zamán-beg and Názirov were specially affected. Two Cossacks were also down with it with a temperature of 104° F. It was necessary to dose both sick and well persistently with quinine. The General, for instance, made a practice of taking 5 grains of quinine in "vodka" every day before dinner and supper.

CHAPTER X.

Return of General Stolietov from Kábul.

An unexpected surprise—The Afghán War Minister—Departure from Kábul—Short history of the Town of Kábul—20 days' journey from Kábul to Samarkand—On the bank of the Amú again—Guilty without any crime—In Shahr-i-Sabz—The last night of the journey—Arrival in Samarkand of the first Afghán Mission.—Reception given them in Samarkand and Táshkand—Departure of General Stolietov to Livadia.—The remaining part of the Mission receives orders to remain in Kábul for an unlimited time—Short general view of the Bámián route—Number of marches.

The departure of the Mission from Kábul took place on the 11th (23rd) August. It was sudden and consequently somewhat strange. Even on the evening of the day previous neither I nor any of the other members of the Mission knew of this departure, and thought it would take place, as at first proposed, not earlier than the 18th to 20th August (30th August to 1st September). However, this event took place on the 11th (23rd) August under the following circumstances :—

On the 10th (22nd) August the General returned from the Amír with Sardár Dovcha Khán,* the War Minister of Afghánistán. This Sardár was a man of enormous stature with harsh features. At the most one would fix his age at 45, and his athletic frame left not a shade of doubt as to his great strength and iron constitution. When he entered the reception room, which usually served as the collecting point for all the members of the Mission, a servant brought in a pipe after him with a long *chibúk*, curled round in an endless number of rings. The pipe itself, however, was not brought in, but left in the west room, from which the *chibúk* (mouth-piece) was brought in. This was a real Turkish "Kalián," the first seen by me in Afghánistán. The natives generally, both Afgháns, Uzbaks and Tájiks, use a pipe of local, very indifferent construction. A pumpkin reservoir for water, a simple clay pipe bowl, sometimes with a small iron network, upon which is laid the tobacco and coals, a reed pipe stem, 2 or 3 feet long, and there you have the whole construction of the pipe (*chilum*).

The Minister sat with us for two hours, and during nearly the whole time the pipe sent us in its bubbling and gurgling sounds from the next room.

The Sardár, however, each time that tobacco was placed in the bowl, only took one or two whiffs, after which the pipe was refilled.

When the Minister, after the first salutations, began to speak of how soon General Stolietov would return to Kábul and whom he would take with him to Táshkand, we, the remaining members of the Mission, did not at all understand at first how new this conversation was to us. Addressing me the Minister asked, "Does the Doctor Sáhib go with the General or remain in Kábul?"

I really did not know what reply to give him to the question, and the General himself answered for me, saying that this would be settled

* Is Daud Shah meant?—*Translator.*

afterwards. Then addressing the Colonel and the remaining members of the Mission, the Minister begged them not to go away, promising them, in the name of the Amír, various distractions, rides, and walks in the town and environs, reviews of the Afghán troops, &c. We sat like statues, not understanding what all this meant.

It was only on the departure of the Sardár that the General informed us that he would ride express to Táshkand, that he had not yet decided whom to take with him and whom to leave in Kábul; that the part of the Mission left behind would spend two or three weeks in Kábul; that he, General Stolietov, was obliged by special circumstances to ride express from Kábul, and expected to accomplish the journey to Samarkand in 12, or at the most in 14 days; he would ride alone in order to gain time, as the whole Mission with all its luggage could not go fast. He then said that the Amír intended to send a large Mission to Táshkand, independent of a few Afghán officials, who would go with him, and in this Mission would be even included "a part of himself"—so the Amír Shír Ali Khán expressed it—his dear grandson, the son of Muhammad Ali Khán.

"The remaining part of the Mission will," continued the General, "only remain in Kábul to await the formation of this embassy, as at present it is not ready and requires a certain time for equipping. I shall probably come from Táshkand to the Amú or to Tásh-Kúrgán to meet this embassy. This will depend, however, upon circumstances; perhaps I shall not come."

After this, having invited Colonel Rozgonov to go with him, the General went into another room. They then conversed together for about half an hour. The Colonel then came out and informed me that the General had sent for me. When I entered the room, the General first asked me about my health. Thanking the General for his kindness, I informed him that at present, apparently, I was quite free from fever and felt quite well.

The General then asked whether I could bear such an express journey, if he took me with him to Táshkand. "We shall not even think of days' halts or rest; we must ride 60 or 70 versts (40 to 46⅔ miles) every day," added he.

I replied that I could not guarantee that I should not fall ill on the journey, although at the present time I felt in perfect health.

"And you wish to return to Táshkand?" he asked.

I replied that I would not refuse to go to Táshkand.

After this the General, having again expressed a fear lest I shall fall ill on the road, ordered me to get ready for the journey. He proposed that we should leave Kábul the same day in the evening. With us would go 10 Cossacks and some "jigits." All the remaining members of the Mission would remain in Kábul. The General ordered me not to take with me either baggage or any other loads. I consequently left all my property in Kábul, only taking with me a little linen and absolutely necessary clothes. I also left my servants with my property in Kábul.

During the day the Wazír came several times to the General with messages from the Amír and then went back.

In the evening, however, we did not succeed in leaving the town, but early the following morning found us already outside the walls of

the Bálá Hissár. With us to Táshkand went the Kemnáb Muhammad Hassan Khán, two Afghán Colonels, the Amir's Aide-de-camp, Ghulam Haidar Khán, and some other Afgháns. The War Minister, Dovcha Khán, and the Wazír, accompanied us almost half way from Kábul to Kalah-i-Kází. The inevitable and unwearying Mossin Khán had to accompany us to the Amú.

Thus I was once again on the road; before us again was a journey, an express and difficult one; behind us Kábul—that secret city to us Russians—a city in which up to the time of the arrival of the present Mission only two or three Russians had been, during the whole period of its existence. Let us cast a passing glance at the historical panorama of this city:—

Kábul is a very ancient city. In antiquity it is not inferior to Balkh and Bámián, and perhaps even to Babylon, Nineveh, and the other cities of the Old World which have long ago disappeared from the face of the earth.

With the name of this city are connected sayings and fables of ancient Persia and Seistán. Thus tradition states that Kábul, amongst many other cities, was subject to Rustam, and that the mother of this suppositious Irán hero, the beauty Rudába, was the daughter of the King Mihrab Sháh Tájik of the Zohák dynasty.* Here in Kábul Rustam met his sad end, in consequence of the animosity of the local ruler.

Greek mythology, too, has not passed by this city without attention. The town of Nicœa, as Kábul is called by the Greeks, was celebrated owing to the fact that here Bacchus obtained his double victory over the nymph Astácia and the Indians. In consequence of this the town was also called Astácia owing to the first event and Indophon owing to the second.† Persian and Indian tales, too, have not passed over this town without notice. Thus in the Zand Avesta it says that the seventh country, forming Ormuzd, was Vaikaret,† and this country corresponds to the present Kábulistán; the word "Dúják" (abode of the Dújáks) is also applied to the country of Zohák, *i.e.*, to Kábul.‡ In the Vedas, the River "Kubha," *i.e.*, the Kophen of Súán-Shán and the present Kábul River, is mentioned.§

The history of this city up to the time of the campaigns of Alexander of Macedon is obscure. But in the histories of Alexander we also read almost nothing about it; at least the name of Kábul is not met with in them. One can only suppose that their Nicœa corresponds with the present Kábul.‖ The Greek geographers of the first century of our era sometimes call Kábul Kabura, as, for instance, Ptolemy; sometimes Artospana, as, for instance, Strabo. We read in the latter: "Another road runs (from Ariana to India) direct through Bactriana to Artospana, the meeting-point of the three roads from Bactria in the Parapomisadi.¶

After the fall of Alexander's monarchy Kábul probably did not play

* Kábulistán and Káfiristán, page 726.
† Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, page 36. London, 1871.
‡ Kábulistán and Káfiristán, page 726; and Cunningham as above.
§ Cunningham, page 37.
‖ Ditto, page 36.
¶ Strabo's Geography, Book XV, Chapter II, para. 8, Russian edition.

the lowest rôle in the series of Greek kingdoms formed in Central Asia. There is no doubt that for a certain time it was a dependency of the so-called Greco-Bactrian kingdom. It is difficult to suppose that the rulers of Bactria in their campaigns to India avoided this half-way house (Τείοδος, as Strabo calls Kábul), and did not desire to add Kábul to the "thousand cities which they conquered from the Indians." During a certain period, however, Kábulistán enjoyed complete independence. Hermes is considered the last Greek king of Kábul. About 105 B.C. the Scythian king Kadphis took possession of this kingdom.* Since then Kábul has been the capital of the Indo-Scythian monarchy. Considerably before this change the doctrine of Buddha sprung up in Kábulistán. But Kaishka, the most celebrated and powerful Scythian monarch of Kábul, who lived in the commencement of the first century of our era,† proved the most staunch propagator of this religious doctrine. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrims Fa-Syan and Súán-Shán cannot sufficiently praise the energy of this king in the cause of Buddhism.

In the first century A.D. Chinese sources also mention Kábul under the name of Hao-Fu.‡ In the middle of the seventh century Kábulistán and the town of Kábul were visited by the Chinese traveller Súán-Shán. In his time Kábulistán was divided into a number of small independant principalities. The whole country was filled with Buddhist monasteries and topes (sepulchral memorials to Buddhist saints, especially to Buddha himself). From this time the country was counted as tributary to the Chinese : this subjection, however, was only nominal.

In the end of the seventh century the Arabs in their conquering progress eastwards penetrated to Kábulistán. Abdur Rahmán, the son of Samra, reached Kábul itself, and took this town after a month's siege. The king of Kábul called for reinforcements from India and drove the Musulmans back. Nevertheless he could not stand against a fresh Arab army, and was obliged to conclude peace on the condition of paying the Musulmans one million dirms annually.§

In 699 the Arabs again invaded Kábulistán under the leadership of Abdulla, son of Abu-bakr. But this campaign ended unsuccessfully. The troops of the Kábul king Rentel surrounded the Arabs, and reducing them to extremity owing to hunger, released them on condition of their paying a war indemnity of 700,000 dirms.‖

But in the following year (700) Abdur Rahmán, son of Ashafs, again compelled the Kábul Rája to pay tribute to the Arabs. The final subjection of Kábul is attributed to the Viceroy of Khurásán—Yakúb, son of Lait. This occurred in 871 A.D.¶ From this period the kings of Kábul transferred their capital to the east of the Indus. (**)

According to Albirúni, the Turk (Scythian) dynasty of the kings of Kábulistán ended in the beginning of the tenth century. The last ruler of this dynasty, by name Laktuzemán, was deposed by his Wazír, Kallar. This Wazír commenced the new dynasty of Rájas, no longer Turks,

* Kábulistán and Káfiristán, page 776.
† Ditto ditto, page 788.
‡ Ditto ditto. page 783.
§ Renaúd-Memoire sur l'Inde, page 178.
‖ Ain-i-Akbari, Volume II, page 184.
¶ Mémoire sur l'Inde, page 209.
** Ditto, pages 244-247.

but of Indian origin. The Turki kings of Kábul followed the Buddhist religion, whereas the new dynasty commenced to introduce Brahminism* into the country. Jaipál, the last king of Kábul belonging to this dynasty, occupied the throne up to 977 A.D.,—that is, up to the time when Sabaktegin was already forming the strong Ghazni monarchy.

The Arab geographers of the tenth century with one voice say that Kábul at that period was in a flourishing condition and exercised great influence on the neighbouring countries. The Arabs ruled it more nominally than in reality. The mass of the population were still infidels. Istákhri says, "The town was occupied by Musulmans, but the suburbs by unbelieving Indians."† But the whole of the town even was not occupied by Musulmans, but only the citadel. Ibn Haukal states this: "The citadel is in the hands of Musulmans, but the town belongs to unbelieving Indians."‡

"The natives think," he continues, "that their king does not possess actual authority until he is recognised in Kábul, and as the capital is far from this town, the kings, at every change of succession, have to go to Kábul in order to be proclaimed in their office, and this is done in accordance with customs which have been established since very ancient times."§ Kábul, by the showing of the same author, was at that time a grand point of collection for Indian merchants. "It forms the half-way house" (on the journey from the Panjáb to Khúrásán). "If we can believe the merchants," we read further on, "every year indigo to the value of two million dinars is sold here, besides what Alap-tegin (who had just established himself at Ghazni) keeps for himself. But judging from what I saw with my own eyes, this trade is not so extensive, owing to the disturbances which occurred here in consequence of the invasions of Alap-tegin, and also of the distrust which exists between him and the neighbouring States."‖

In 979 Kábul became a part of the Ghazni kingdom. Ghaznivide Sultáns possessed it until the middle of the twelfth century, when the Gaurides finally wrecked Ghazni, which had been already weakened by the frequent attacks of the Sèljuk Turks. But even at this time Kábul had not by any means lost its importance as the ancient capital. Its moral influence on the neighbouring countries is confirmed by Edrisi, an Arab writer in the middle of the twelfth century A.D.:—

"Kábul is one of the great cities of India," says he. "It is surrounded by walls, within which is a strong citadel, and outside it various suburbs. The kings only enjoy full authority when they have been proclaimed in Kábul. If they live in another city, they are inevitably obliged to go to Kábul in order to be crowned."¶ He repeats the same statement too in other parts of the book.**

From the princes of Gaur, Kábul passed into the possession of the rulers of Khwarizm (Khiva), and from the latter to the Mongols. Chengiz Khán was here in 1221, following the brave but unfortunate Sultán Jeláluddín.

* Mémoire sur l'Inde, pages 210-211.
† Al Istakhri, Liber climatum.
‡ Oriental Geography, Ouseley, page 226.
§ Mémoire sur l'Inde, pages 244-5.
‖ Mémoire sur l'Inde, pages 244-5.
¶ Géographie d'Edrisi, Volume II, page 459.
** Ditto, Volume II, page 182.

After this Kábul sank to the rank of an ordinary village. This is what almost the greatest Arab traveller, Ibn Batúta, says about it, who was there in the beginning of the fourteenth century :—

"We then went (from Ghazni) to Kábul. Formerly this was a very celebrated city; now it is not more than a village, inhabited by a tribe of Persian origin who are called Afgháns."*

Then, between 1380 and 1390, another Mongol devastator of Asia, Tamerlane, was in Kábul, also on his way to India. From this period time smiled on Kábul, and it commenced to rise from its dust. The Tímúride Ulúg Mirza, having received Kábul as his district, took great pains in its prosperity. Sultán Báber in his "Memoirs" mentions some of the buildings of his grandfather which embellished the town. But undoubtedly Báber Mirza himself took still greater trouble to promote the prosperity of this town. Báber, who had possession of it in 1504,—who celebrated in it song and prose, praising its climate above all other countries then known to him,—lived in Kábul for several years. Here he intermingled his royal duties with the fine arts and sociable little feasts in the Shah-Kábul citadel.

A sincere Muhammadan, he nevertheless fully valued the quality of the good Kábul wine.

The well-known distich which follows is from his pen :—

"Drink wine in the Kábul citadel and do not delay to pass round the cup.

"Here there is everything—mountains and lake, city and wide valley"†—although, probably from modesty, he ascribes them to Mullah Muhammad Mu-ammai.

Notwithstanding that "the climate of Kábul is charming, and that there is not another climate in the world which can compare with it," Báber left it in order to go to India and gather fresh laurels of conquest. On the 10th May 1526 he proclaimed himself Emperor of India, and became the founder of the dynasty of the Great Moguls. As it is known, this dynasty existed until the year 1857.

Kábul formed after this part of the kingdom of the Moguls. In 1670 it thought to commence an independant existence, separating from the empire of the Moguls, but it did not find itself strong enough to strive with the mighty Emperor Aurungzebe, and in 1675 it was again included in the number of the provinces of India. In 1738 Kábul was destroyed by Nádir Sháh, who may, with justice, be called the great-grandson of Chengiz, by profession and occupation, for he devastated everything which came in his way with fire and the sword.

The time was, however, drawing near when Kábul should rise from its dust and ruins. After the death of Nádir Sháh, in 1747, the head of the leading Afghán tribe of Sadozais, Ahmed Sháh, became the real consolidator of Afghán soil. The Duráni monarchy founded by him embraced within itself almost the same lands as the monarchy of Mahmúd of Ghazni. His possessions extended from Mashhad to Jellálábád and Multán, and from Merv and Balkh to Kelát.‡

* Voyages d'Ibn Batuta, Vol. III., p. 89.—*Defrémery.*

† Báber Mirza's "Memoirs," translated by Constable Ross, 1871, Vol. I., p. 280.

‡ Báber Mirza, p. 283.

His son Timúr Sháh inherited all his possessions from his father. Kábul was made the capital of the empire by him and embellished by many fine public buildings.

But the united Afghán monarchy did not last for long. In the beginning of the nineteenth century it fell to pieces. Nevertheless, Kábul did not lose its importance. On the contrary, whoever first obtained possession of it reckoned himself the ruler of the whole of Afghánistán. In 1826, Dost Muhammad Khán established himself in Kábul, and afterwards again united the disjointed portions of the Afghán kingdom. The eastern portions, however, still remained in the hands of the Sikhs, and from them passed to the English. In 1863, Dost Muhammad, having taken to himself the new title of "Amír," died. During five years Kábul passed from hand to hand of the parties struggling for power. Three brothers and one nephew were striving with one another for the superiority. Afzal Khán and Azim Khán, as the elder brothers of Shír Ali Khán, were not willing to submit to him, and the talented son of Afzal Khán, Abdur Rahmán Kháu, supported them.

In 1868, Shír Ali Khán finally established himself in Kábul.

If we turn to the history of the travels of the Europeans who at various times have visited Kábul, we see that, until the present century, Europeans have rarely been in this city. Almost the first Europeans here were the members of the Russian Mission sent by the Czar Alexis Michaïlovich to Bukhára in 1675. The head of this Mission, Vasilius Daudov, returned from Bukhára to Moscow. But the interpreter of the Mission, Mahmet Yúsuf Kasimov, and the sub-interpreter, Ivan Shapkin, were intrusted to go on with a letter and presents to the Sháh of India. The following is what Kasimov has told us of his journey and residence in the town of Kábul:—

"In 183§ he, Mahmet, reached the Indian town of Kábul, and the voïvode (ruler) of that town, Mekremet Khán, wrote to the town of Anabat† to the voïvode, Azi Khán, informing him of his, Mahmet's, arrival, and that he, Azi Khán, should write to His Majesty the Sháh for orders about this Mahmet. And Azi Khán wrote to Mekremet Khán that His Majesty the Sháh did not wish to be on friendly terms and to establish amicable relations with the great monarchy, and that he would not order Mahmet Yúsuf to be sent to him, because for many years there had been no ambassadors or messenger from the Russian king to His Majesty the Sháh, and that now there should not be, and that Mahmet Yúsuf (Isuf) might ride back again from that city.

"And Mahmet Yúsuf pleaded much to the voïvode of that town of Kábul, saying that he was sent by a great monarch to the Sháh of India with a letter about necessary matters connected with both kingdoms, and that he, the voïvode, should send him to the Sháh. And Mahmet Khán stood to his point and greatly insisted on it. And the voïvode said to Mahmet Yúsuf that the Sháh had ordered him not to be sent, and would not permit the king's letter to be accepted and sent on, because for several centuries before, from his forefather, Temir Aksak, up the present time, there had been no ambassadors or messengers of the Russian kingdom sent to the Indian monarchy; for the kingdom of Russia was at a great distance from India, and before this there had

* A misprint; probably 1683.

† *i.e.*, the town of Jahánabad or Delhi.

never been any quarrels between them and were not at the present time; and it was evident that the great monarch was only sending ambassadors to the Sháh of India for the sake of riches, and not for anything else. The religion of Russia, too, was different, and it was unbecoming them as Musulmans to have friendship with Christians. And on the last occasion, in the year 167,* a Russian ambassador, called Senka, by birth a Jew, came into Indian territory. Having reached the Indian town of Kábul, he petitioned the king to admit him into his service and make him a head man. And the king admitted him into his service and ordered him to be about his person, and made him the commander of 500 and gave him high pay, and if Mahmet Yúsuf desires to serve the king, he will also permit him to do so. And with regard to the friendly present which he states he has from the great monarch to the Sháh, the Sháh will order the tradesmen to value them and pay the value in money to Mahmet Khán.

"And Mahmet Khán said that he was his monarch's faithful servant, and sent to the Sháh on matters affecting both kingdoms, and would not serve the Sháh. And Senka, the Jew, was a thief, who forgot God's anger, and the kindness of the great monarch, betrayed his sovereign and called himself an ambassador; but he, Senka, was the gardener of a merchant Shemakhinetz, and went from Astrakhán with merchants to trade in Bukhára and from Bukhára to India, and called himself an ambassador, and he, Senka, stole away, embroiled the great monarch with the Sháh of India, and therefore the Sháh thinks that he, Mahmet Yúsuf, will also belie himself; but he is really sent from the great monarch and is not a false ambassador. Mahmet Yúsuf was then sent back from Kábul without having been to the Sháh."†

In January 1677 Kasimov was in Moscow.

But this was not the first Russian embassy equipped for the far "India." In the reign of Alexis Michaïlovich, 28 years before Kasimov's journey to Kábul, a Russian Mission was equipped for India.

We read in Malgin :‡ "Owing to the great distance no embassies had been sent by the Russian monarchs, but in 1648 the Czar Alexis Michaïlovich was pleased to send a Mission to the Sháh of India to inspect the kingdom and trading industries; but at that time the intention was not carried out, because there was war between the Indian king Sháh Jahán and the Kizilbásh or Persian Sháh, Abbás II., about the town of Kakshahar (Kandahár)."

Thus the relations of Russia with Kábul commenced much earlier than the relations of the Western European kingdoms. At the time when Europe only knew of Kábul by report, Russian people and a Russian embassy had already been in that city.

In 1783, the first Western European, J. Forster, traversed the Kábul Valley.

After that the English Mission with Elphinstone at their head was in Kábul in 1809.

In 1823 Moorcroft passed several anxious days there.

In 1832 the well-known traveller Burnes came here in the quality of Agent of the East Indian Government, brought the Amír Dost

* Apparently another misprint.

† This is in old Russian and in the style of writing of the period when written.

‡ Minaev, pp. 223-5.

Muhammad presents, and availed himself of the Amír's hospitality for several days. From here he undertook his journey to Bukhára and through Turkomania—a journey which has made his name as celebrated amongst Europeans as his later political and administrative action at Kábul, which was so odious to the Afgháns.

After this, during the ten years from 1832 to 1842, there were a good many Europeans, chiefly English, in Kábul.

The years 1841 and 1842 were specially memorable to Kábul owing to two catastrophes—that of the English and of the Afgháns. The cause of the first, in which an English army of 20,000 perished, was the national feeling of the Afgháns, their love of freedom, the protest of the natives against the all-engulfing grasp of the "red uniform." The Khurd Kábul defile has the same significance to the Afgháns as Salamis had for the ancient Greeks, the same as Moscow in 1812 had for us Russians.

On the other hand, the second catastrophe, which was the seizure of the city of Kábul, was an act of savage revenge—an act which had the sonorous name of "re-establishment of the national honour" given to it. In this re-establishment the English placed themselves on a par with savages, who in their actions are only led by their unrestrained instincts. And on whom did they carry out its execution? On the troops who had defeated them the year before in the Khurd Kábul defile? No—its execution was carried out on an unarmed and defenceless populace! No—its execution was carried out on deserted buildings and bazars! The town was destroyed, and the conquerors, proud in the speedy accomplishment of the "re-establishment of the national honour of England," hastened to betake themselves back to India.* An act worthy of Chengiz Khán now bears its fruits. The English, who are so proud of their civilization, are deeply despised here in Afghánistán. I have already said above that the very name of "Ingliz," Englishman, is here a word of insult.

In 1837-38 a Russian was again here, Lieutenant Vitkevich.

Since that time (1842) up to the arrival of the Russian Mission, not only had no Russian, but no other European, been in Kábul.

After a journey of 20 versts we halted for breakfast at the village of Káfir Kalah. Our departure from Kábul was so hurried that even the Kemnáb, who had obtained the respect of the Mission by his activity, could on this occasion prepare nothing for the necessary rest. However, he quickly supplied a light repast and carpets, and we rested capitally under the open sky, in the shade of the poplars. On the evening of this day we reached the village of Koti Ashrú, where we passed the night. Here even tents made their appearance, and supplies of food in sufficient quantity. The Kemnáb had succeeded already in arranging matters in a proper manner. He did not succeed, however, in collecting sufficient escort to accompany us. In consequence of this the General ordered two Cossack sentries to be on duty for the night. The solitary corporal

* The events of 1879-80, which occurred in Kábul, were so similar to those of 1841-42, that one cannot be sufficiently surprised. The same outburst of national indignation against the oppressing English, and the same savage revenge on the defenceless, peaceful population of Kábul by the English troops.

Note by Translator.—The Russians would simply have wiped Kábul off the face of the earth, population and all, if their ambassador had been murdered.

to the 10 Cossacks who were with us was not to sleep all night. Having made this disposition, the General asked if he, the corporal, was the only one with the escort. On receiving an affirmative reply, he said, "All the same, don't sleep all night."

Up till nightfall the Cossacks enjoyed the shade of their tents; but when the dusky shroud of night came over the earth, the General had the Cossacks' tents struck and ordered them to lie round the tent in which he himself and I were. I do not think the shroud of night was so suitable in the prose of life as in poetical license. In this case the shroud of night had to serve the Cossacks instead of the cover of their tents. The night was very fresh, and the results of this arrangement were not long in showing themselves. On the following day two Cossacks were sick with rheumatism.

On the 12th (24th) August, we traversed the distance between Koti Ashrú and Yúrt. We breakfasted at Sar-Chashma. At Yúrt, or rather near it, we passed the night. At night the Cossacks were again deprived of their tents. I proposed to the General to supply the Cossacks with felts to spread under them, as it was damp and cold, and not to take away their tents at night. But the General looked upon this advice as a protest and breach of discipline on my part, and I had to listen to a very harsh reproof from him. When, on the morning of the next day, I went outside the tent, I saw the Cossacks lying on the bare ground with their saddles under their heads and wrapped in their grey cloaks; they were covered with hoar frost. The village of Yúrt is 10,618 feet above the sea, according to Haug. (?)

On the 13th (25th) August we marched from Yúrt to the Irák Valley,—that is, about 70 versts (46⅔ miles) of hill road.

On the 14th (26th) August we were at Bámián. We got here rather early, and did not go farther, having done only 20 miles in the day.

Here the General received a post from Táshkand. Its contents remained unknown to me.

With the correspondence was sent some quinine from the Samarkand hospital. A Samarkand "Jigit" brought the post; he had ridden here from Samarkand in two weeks. On the following day a march was made from Bámián to Saigán. Two Cossacks again fell sick with rheumatism; one of them could not move his neck at all.

In Saigán the General himself was taken ill with fever; the attack, however, was not a severe one.

On the following day two Cossacks and one Jigit again fell ill at Kahmard. On this occasion the iron constitution of the sergeant could not withstand the combination of unfavourable conditions in which the Cossacks were placed. These conditions were as much artificial as natural.

Up till this time we had ridden the same horses on which we had started from Kábul. The General, however, promised us a change of horses, but not before Dúáb. Up till this place we should have to ride the same horses. When I say "we," I mean myself and the Cossacks, as Mossin Khán's "amblers" were always at the service of the General, and he made use of them whenever he wished. As far as I was concerned, I experienced no inconvenience at all. My ill-favoured Chirákchi nag had legs of iron, was unwearying, and had a swift amble.

I could go along at the same pace as the General. But the Cossacks were truly deserving of pity. In order not to remain behind the General, they had constantly to urge their horses into a half trot.

Such an unendurable jolting throughout a 50 to 70 verst (33⅓ to 46⅔ miles) march could only be borne by the iron physique of the sons of the steppes—the Ural Cossacks. But to this discomfort was joined yet another, and not a lesser one. Every night the Cossacks had to find two posts. Although there were ten Cossacks in all, only six of these took this duty. Two Cossacks, attending on the General, were excused from duty. The sergeant also did not take guard, consequently the corporal *was compelled not to sleep all night in consequence of having to post the sentries.*

The six Cossacks, too, who were obliged to take sentry duty, got little sleep; for, imagine three changes of sentries during the night for two posts divided amongst six men, and you will see how much time each Cossack had to sleep. Moreover, during the day they could never sleep; early in the morning, even before breakfasting, we were mounted, and often only reached camp at nightfall, although it is true that we always halted 1½ to 2 hours for breakfast in the middle of the march.

Notwithstanding constant sickness, the Cossacks were, all the same, deprived of their tents at night. I do not know, and cannot even imagine, how these unfortunate sick Cossacks bore their sentry duty.

On the 17th (29th) August, when we crossed the Kárá Kotal Pass, the sick Cossacks, on reaching the summit of the pass, threw themselves through weakness on the ground. The sergeant groaned feebly, and in his feverish delirium expressed a wish "to remain here, on the summit of the pass, where it was so pleasantly cool." His temperature under the armpit was up to 105·8° Fahr. On the night of this day we reached Dūáb. Here Lál Muhammad Khán, the Governor of Bámián, visited us. The General gave him a gold watch and some other trifle.

The General did not give us changes of horses here. Two more Cossacks got ill.

On the 18th August (30th) we passed the night at Khuram. When within 5 versts (3⅓ miles) from the camp, we again met a "Jigit" with a post from Táshkand. There were letters from M. Kaufmann and M. Iványov. Papers were also sent with the letters. At Haibak the General bought several horses for the Cossacks.

On the evening of this day, when the new moon appeared, the Kemnáb on seeing it for the first time at once took a sabre from the hands of a Cossack standing near him, and repeated a prayer ordained in the Korán. He afterwards spoke about this circumstance as of a good omen.

"During this prayer," said the Kemnáb, "it is a very good thing to have some else's sword in your hand. It is a good omen."

On the 20th August (1st September) we passed the night at Tásh-Kurgán.

On this day we had something like a day's halt. The General was buying horses. Good round sums were given for some of them. Thus one horse, dappled grey, was bought for ₹1,200, a white horse for ₹700, &c. For all these horses the General paid with the rupees which had been presented to the Mission by the Amír at Kábul.

All these horses, or at least the greater part of them, were told off by the General for some other object, and not to supply us with fresh

animals. As my horse was very tired, and almost fell from weakness, and as I could not buy another owing to having no money, the General lent me a sorry beast here. On the 22nd August (3rd September) we reached Mazár-i-Sharíf, and were lodged in the same house as in the month of June. The new Luïnáb, Khúshdil Khán, met us outside the town with part of the troops. No salute was given us from the guns on this occasion.

On the same day we left the town in the direction of the Amú-Darya. Before his departure the General presented the Luïnáb with a gold watch, a revolver, and some other trifles.

On this occasion we did not take the direction of Chushká-Guzar but on Patta-Guzar. This route is rather shorter than the former, but then it is more barren. Throughout the whole 80 versts (53 miles) there is not a single village, not a single plot of cultivated ground. Almost half way from Mazár-i-Sharíf to the Amú, but nearer to the former, are the extensive ruins of an ancient town. These ruins bear the name of Siáhgírd.

We started from Mazár-i-Sharíf at 5 P.M. On this occasion we traversed the town by the chief and most populous streets. Part of this route led through the covered-in arcades of the bazar. The emerald-green cupola of the Mazár was on our left, and on our right was the fort, defending the eastern approaches to the town.

The town and the narrow belt of the circum-adjacent fields had scarcely come to an end when we entered the desolate, bare steppe, which occupied the whole expanse before us. The further we went north, the greater became the amount of sand. Through a locality like this we rode for several hours. The purple-red sun had already disappeared below the horizon, and we still continued our monotonous journey onwards. Consequently, a few minutes after sunset, we were immersed in darkness; the indistinct shadows of the occasional *saksaul* bushes took gigantic proportions in the evening gloom, scanty thorn scrub looked like woods. Every sound resounded in the still night air, and had the peculiar sharpness of the steppe.

The General rode the whole time in silence. Mossin Khán was not with us; he stopped behind for something in the town (Mazár). Now a voice was heard in front of us, and several mounted figures suddenly appeared out of the gloom, and a cloud of dust was raised by their horses.

"Ay adam!" cried out the General to them, "ta Siáhgírd in rah ast?" (Hallo, my man! is this the road to Siáhgírd?)

"Ha!" was heard in answer.

"Ta—ha! Man shúma pursán me-kunam, chira gúfti 'ha'?" (What is 'ha'? I asked you a question; why do you say ha?)

"In rah ast" (This is the road) was heard from gloomy space.

"Chand kroh ast az inja ta Siáhgírd?" (How many kroh is it from here to Siáhgírd?) the General continued to enquire

"Nazdik ast" (It is close) the voice was heard to reply from some distance. "Nazdik ast?" repeated the General. "Ek kroh nazdik ast punj kroh nazdik ast. Rast gufted."* (Close? I ask you how many kroh is it? One kroh is close, 5 krohs is close. Speak the truth.)

But this time no answer was received. I do not know how it happened

* Out in grammar. "Rast be gowed" it should be.—*Translator.*

that the Kemnáb with his companions had got separated from us and had ridden on ahead. Rajáb Ali, our caravan-báshi, was behind with the baggage and was also not with us. We were now riding alone without knowing the road. We had to go on at random.

Soon, however, the flames of the fires made at our halting ground shone out of the gloom. A few minutes more, and we were close to the tents.

On the following day, in the morning, I was awakened by a monotonous but rather angry conversation. Opening my eyes I saw Mossin Khán sitting on his heels by the General's bed. The General was sitting on the bed dressed in a warm coat, and was saying something severely to Mossin Khán. The latter was feebly justifying himself. Thanks to the small stock of the Persian words and phrases known to me, I could understand that Mossin Khán was excusing himself to the General for his neglect of duty in having, on the previous evening, through indolence remained in the town and not accompanied us on the journey—thanks to which we had almost lost our way!

"The Amír Sáhib enjoined you to accompany us," said the General, "and this is how you carry out his directions! You exchanged your duty for the harem, and yet you are a man and an officer!" said the General in reproach to Mossin Khán. I can write about this to Kábul and it will be bad for you!"

"General Sáhib," said Mossin Khán, endeavouring to justify himself, "you know my service on your behalf. You know also I have been almost continually with you during two whole months. For two months I have not seen my home and family. Might not matters have cropped up during this time which required to be settled by me? It was to carry out these necessary matters that I remained at home, and not for the sake of my wives."

"Thanks to me you have been made a great man," continued the General; "thanks to me the Amír Sáhib has known you and entrusted you with the important duty of accompanying me, and how have you fulfilled your trust?"

"What have you done particularly for me?" replied Mossin Khán. "How have I become a great man? Before I saw you I was a ditan,* and I am one still. Except trouble you have given me nothing. In fact, if you write to Kábul to the Amír Sáhib about my want of punctuality in my duty, I shall suffer for it, but then you will not be acting justly."

The tone, however, in which the General spoke, gradually got softer, and the conversation ended pretty amicably. On the morning of this day a post was again received. Several of the letters were addressed to the members of the Mission who had remained in Kábul. There were also papers. Both of these were despatched the same day to Kábul. In his letter to the commandant of the Mission, General Kaufmann informed him that the troops which had been collected at Jám had been some time since dispersed to their permanent quarters.

At 12 o'clock in the day we again started. At our halting-place there were some neglected, tumble-down sarais round the tents; these were the wretched remains of an extensive ancient town. A narrow stream of water, brought here from the Amú-Darya, many versts distant, intersected

* I do not know what is meant. It is probably a corruption.—*Translator.*

the heap of ruins and deserted houses. At one place on the edge of the brook were some poor fruit trees, with foliage covered with dust, as if they were covered with blight.

When we passed through the ruins, several sunburnt, thick-skinned Uzbák faces peeped out of one of the dome-shaped buildings, looking timidly at the Afghán escort.

Heaps of burnt bricks were seen everywhere, covering the ground for the space of several acres. In some places the natives had made a store of bricks which they take from here to Mazár-i-Sharíf, selling them there for building purposes. In the middle of these heaps of bricks, rubbish and shards, rise the remains of mud buildings. Some of them are pretty well preserved, and even the plaster has remained whole. There are niches made in the walls. Two or three poor cupolas rise above the remains of apparently extensive buildings. I did not, however, see a single glazed tile or a single inscription here. The remains of the mud buildings belonged probably to more recent constructions than these ruins of burnt brick. As usual I addressed various questions to the Kemnáb about these ruins, but the only answer I received was that the place was called Siáhgírd, and that "formerly, at a very remote period, Káfirs lived here. Moreover," added he, "they say that in former times Siáhgírd was one of the suburbs of the great Balkh." *

Having traversed the ruins, we again entered the sandy waste. For the first 5 versts, however, the road was pretty firm, and it was pretty easy going for the horses. Soon we came to a "nomad sepulchre," surmounted, as usual, by a poor mud cupola. The lower part of the building was filled up with sand.

About 2 versts beyond this tomb small sand-hills commenced. The further we moved forward, the higher and higher they became. The road ran through drift sand and the horses' feet sank above the fetlocks. In some places the sand-hills opened out, forming a basin with a firm bottom covered with a whitish film of salt. The heat of the sun during this march was excessive. We only breathed more freely when a cool current of air began to reach us from the north, which meant that the Amú was near. Nevertheless, we had to traverse the sandy waves of this ocean-desert for yet another hour, and then we saw on the northern horizon the dark-blue streak of the Amú-Darya. The sun had already set when we reached the vegetation along the bank.

At this spot there is a regular wood of stunted, deformed poplars, (local name *patta*) and willow, extending along the bank. Groups of trees alternate with high reed-beds and meadows. In places the thorn bushes with their sharp thorns caught the clothes of the traveller, and the tops of the reeds switched into the riders' eyes.

In the meantime it got darker and darker. Somehow it again happened that we were riding without our conductors. The Kemnáb did not know the road to the passage over the Amú. Rajáb Ali was on ahead with the baggage. We again rode at random along a path winding now through wood and now through meadows. An unpleasant, sharp, miasmatic smell met our noses. Millions of mosquitoes and gnats swarmed in the woods and filled the air with their monotonous humming.

* Almost the first information we have about this little place is from Ibn Haukal in the tenth century.—*Oriental Geography*, page 223.

Now we crossed a little bridge over an irrigation channel, the beams of which bent under our horses' feet; we waded through two or three marshes and reached the bank of the river. But there was no crossing place here. The silent but swift river was here not more than 700 feet broad; it was evident that this was not the main bed of the river, but one of its branches; the bank which we saw opposite to us probably belonged to one of the islands in which the bed of the Amú is so rich. We rode along the bank, down stream, for about half an hour. Soon the path disappeared altogether. Where were we to go? Where was the road to the passage?

"Rajáb Ali!" screamed the General. "Ali-li-li," answered the echo along the shore.

"Kemnáb Sáhib! kuja mi-ravem?" asked the General of the Kemnáb (Where shall we go to?)

"Ne mi-danum" (I don't know), "General Sáhib," was the Kemnáb's answer.

"Rajáb Ali!!!' screamed several Afgháns with all the strength of their lungs.

"A-a-al-li-li," again answered the echo.

It was evident that no result would be obtained in this way. It was therefore decided to turn back to the place where the road leaves the sands at the belt of the vegetation on the bank.

Here, in an open space amongst the poplar groves, we sat down to wait. Several Afgháns were sent to the river bank to look for Rajáb Ali and the point of passage.

In the meantime the darkness became greater and greater. Fires were lighted. On both sides trees with some dry branches were found, and the Afgháns burnt them and made a regular illumination.

And now two mounted figures rode into the space lit up by the light of the fires; these were Uzbáks.

The General at once began to question them if they had not seen the baggage with Rajáb Ali. The Uzbáks suddenly finding themselves in the middle of such a large group of armed men, and blinded by the light of the fires, were, it seemed, quite cowed.

The General repeated his question, and this time rather angrily.

The Uzbáks were still more cowed and hastily began to assert that they knew nothing either of the baggage or Rajáb Ali; that they had never seen him, and did not even know that such a man existed in the world; and that they had never even heard anything about him from their neighbours and acquaintances.

The General hearing this nonsense began to lose patience.

"What nonsense is this you are talking?" (In his anger he was speaking in Russian, and the Cossack Soladovnikov translated it to the Uzbáks in Tartar.) "I ask you whether you have not seen the baggage and Rajáb Ali at the crossing place, and you say that you have never seen him or heard of him. Where is the road to the crossing point?"

The Uzbáks, it appeared, had become quite senseless from fear. They incoherently faltered out that they knew of no crossing, and had never heard of it!

"You wish to make game of what I want to know," said the General, raising his voice more and more. I will teach you! Cossacks, seize them

and bind them, and don't let them go until they say where the point of passage is."

The Uzbáks were seized and bound. Fortunately for them one of the Afgháns rode up from the crossing, who told us that the road was found, and that Rajáb Ali with the baggage had been long waiting for us on the bank of the River Amú.

When we reached the bank everything was already prepared for us—yúrts, beds, tea and supper, and Rajáb Ali with a beaming face was ready to inform the General that everything was all right and properly arranged, but met with a threatening look from the General, and instead of praise received a severe rebuke. It was very damp here; the yúrts and tents were wet with dew, just as if it had been raining, and it felt very cold.

On the following day, the 24th August (5th September), we crossed to the Bukhára side of the River Amú. The hospitable Bukhárans received us with their usual kindness and friendliness. Whole piles of various fruits and vegetables at once appeared round our yúrts. I gave a full share of attention to the Shírábád melons: they are excellent, and incomparably better than those which we ate in Afghánistán.

On the next day we rode to Shirábád. The Shírábád Beg was not then in the town, which rejoiced me considerably. This meant that he was in such good health as to be able to make more or less extended excursions. His sons, who met us, said that their father was now quite well. Not long before our arrival he had gone to the Kárá-tágh Mountains to put down an insurrection which had broken out there.

On the same day we left Shírábád and passed the night at the village of Lailakán.

On the 27th August (8th September) we passed the night at Kárá-Khovál. This little place is on the road to Shaar. This road branches from the Shírábád-Kurshi main road, a little north of the "Iron Gates," a few versts before reaching the Ak-Rabát Pass.

From Sar-áb to Kárá-Khovál is about 50 versts (33 miles). The road throughout crosses from one range of hills to another and passed from one hollow to another. We had to cross two or three low passes. The whole locality through which we now rode was desolate, bare and lifeless; this was a stony, undulating desert. Only once throughout the whole march did we meet with some trees—mountain juniper. The village of Kárá-Khovál lies in a deep hollow, bordered on the north and south by limestone cliffs. A small brook flows through this depression and supplies the inhabitants with water, impregnated with salts of limestone. This stream is called the Kichi-úrú-Darya. Here the peaches were at this time still unripe.

On the next day we travelled about 40 miles and passed the night at the foot of Yár-teube* through the same desert, hillocky locality.

At Yár-teube messengers met us from the Amír of Bukhára, who at that time was at Shaar. Here, too, a letter was received by General Stolietov from the Governor of Samarkand, General Iványov. The General informed us, amongst other things, that a triumphal reception was being prepared for the Afghán Mission at Samarkand, and that carriages had been sent for us to Jám. Consequently General Iványov begged General Stolietov to fix the day on which the Afghán Mission should

* Or tépé.

enter Samarkand. As we were not going in the direction of Shaar-Samarkand, Jám was left quite on one side of our route. Consequently General Stolietov informed the Governor of Samarkand that the Afghán Mission would not go to Jám, but by the Kárá-teube (tépé)* Pass. Of the day of the arrival he promised to inform him in good time.

Yár-teube is in a steppe locality. The hills are 5 to 8 versts (3⅓ to 5⅓ miles) from it to the east. This little place is poorly irrigated, but still there is pretty rich vegetation. In the garden in which we passed the night, magnificent elms were growing.

The slopes of the nearest hills. and also the tract round the fort of Yár-teube, were occupied by corn-fields, chiefly wheat. Corn grew here in part without artificial irrigation. At this time the harvest was going on, and heaps of the cut sheaves dotted the uniform, level surface of the steppe. Here, for the first time, I saw the natives bind the reaped corn in sheaves, In Afghánistán, as well as in Russian Turkistán, the cut corn is not tied in sheaves. On the place where it is cut they at once make a "ták" and thresh the corn there.

On the 29th August (10th September) we reached Shaar (Shahr). The Bukhárans prepared as splendid a reception for us as on our entry into Karshi in the month of June. Of the Bukhárans already known to me I here perceived the Mír Akhor, Rahmat Ulla, Udaichi, and some other persons.

Shaar is not quite the true name of the town; the natives call it Shahr-i-sabz. This is the more appropriate name, for it does not only mean "town" (shahr) but "green town." The vegetation here is really magnificent. The town literally is buried in thick gardens. These gardens extend to a long distance from the town on all sides. Here there is a great abundance of water, supplied by the Rivers Káshká-Darya and Āk-Darya, which divide into many channels and streams.

For a distance of several versts we had to ride through the suburbs. Then we rode into the town itself through the gates, set in a very thick mud wall.

The residence set apart for us by the Bukhárans was on this occasion not destitute of a certain amount of comfort and even of poetry. Two verandahs surrounded a small flower garden, consisting of simple but rather sweet-smelling flowers.

Alongside the garden was a clean little courtyard, sprinkled with sand. On one side it was bordered with peach trees, mulberries, and apricots, which extended their long pliant branches even into the verandah. Through the middle of the northern verandah flowed a water channel two arshines (4⅔ feet) wide and 1¾ feet deep. This residence represented coolness and luxury.

Breakfast was served in the verandah, and several tables were laid with numerous dishes of meat and sweets. A mass of all kinds of fruit tempted the appetite awakened by a ride of 40 versts (26⅔ miles). On the table amongst the fruits were also placed several pots of flowers, amongst which the fuschias with their rosy purple blossoms were especially noticeable. Amongst the number of the varied fruits were seen some very large grapes. I am in no way exaggerating when I say that each grape was the size of a walnut. Although the season for apricots had long since past here, excellent ones were placed on the table,

* The black hill.

and purple-cheeked peaches peeped appetizingly out from amongst the green leaves on which they were laid.

Scarcely had we cleaned off the dust of the journey when the Beg of Shahr, Alim Beg Pervanáchi, came to our house. With him came the Mír Akhor.

The conversation of the latter flowed on in a copious stream uninterruptedly for nearly an hour. He spoke long and feelingly about the illness and death of M. Weinberg, who had not long before died in Táskhand from typhus.

Weinberg Teurya, ah! ah! uldi (is dead). What a good man he was! Ah, how sad! How well he was and suddenly he died! babbled the Mír Akhor in his Tartar-Perso-Russian medley.

One could imagine that he was sincerely sorry for Weinberg's death. The fact was M. Weinberg was for a long time the head of the diplomatic section under the Governor-General; he had often been in Bukhára, had often corresponded with the native authorities, and was well known to Rahmat Ulla, the Mír Akhor.

I must remark that M. Weinberg had a very good reputation with the natives generally, both of Russian Turkistán and of the independent Khanates. His local political policy was much respected.

Has the doctor Teurya (Sáhib) learnt the Tájik language? said the loquacious Mír Akhor to me.

I replied, "Tajiki ne mi danam ama Farsi kam kam migoyam" (I do not know Tájik, but speak a little Persian).

The Mír Akhor smiled.

"You do not know Tájik and know Persian," said he in Russian, smiling over the whole of his broad face.

I at that time could not understand these smiles, but afterwards ascertained that the Mír Akhor did not smile at me without a cause.

The fact is that the Tájiks are descendants of the ancient Persians—the aborigines of the country; the Tájik language is the same as the Persian, only corrupted to a certain degree by the insertion of Turkish words. Consequently I did not speak accurately when I affirmed that I understood Persian and not Tájik, which caused the Mír Akhor to smile.

The Beg of Shahr, a pure Uzbák, comported himself seriously, and spoke little and softly. His dignity showed itself in every fold of his brocaded robe and each turn of his enormous white turban with golden spots.

The Bukhára officials left us in the evening.

On the evening of the same day a snake came out of the watercourse flowing through the verandah and hid itself in the garden. There it was at once sought for and killed. It appeared to be, however, a harmless house-snake.

When it was quite dark, artistes of the Amír of Bukhára's private theatre arrived. They were simply dancing-boys, who sometimes, when dancing, dress in women's clothes. They are called in the local language "bachá. The Amír, as a sign of his special favour to his guests, had sent them for our amusement. There were three in all; the eldest 13, the youngest 10.

I hardly waited for the end of the performance. I went to sleep on one of those broad native beds abundantly supplied with quilted

razais which were placed along the wall of the verandah. I went to bed without undressing.

This was the eighth day since I had taken off my clothes, even my coat. As I was dressed when I left Kábul, so I rode in the same clothes throughout the journey, slept and ate in them. I determined not to undress throughout the journey from Kábul to Samarkand, as I was afraid of catching cold, which would not have been very difficult. I should only have had to take off my coat after a tiring 15 miles' march, when the skin was moist and heated and all the organs wearied, and a draught might very easily have chilled and given me rheumatism or fever. As it was, under this régime, I was the only one of the persons returning from Kábul who avoided those unpleasant guests—rheumatism and fever. My skin, however, began to be irritable and itch, and I urgently required a Russian bath. I tried to allay this unpleasant feeling by representing to myself how I would wash and lather myself when I got to Samarkand, but at present I had to continue to suffer.

On the morning of the 30th August (11th September) the General had an audience with the Amír. He went to him alone. The Afghán embassy also went to pay a visit to the Amír, but a little later than the General and separate from him.

At about 2 P.M. we left Shahr in the direction of the Kárá-teube Pass. About 4 P.M. we reached the village of Koinár, where a short halt was made.

The long shadows of the neighbouring peaks already covered the defiles and mountain hollows with gloom; the slanting rays of the setting sun gilded the gardens and fields of the village and played in rosy tints on the snow-fields of the mountain masses of Hazrat Sultán when our cavalcade left the village nestling in the defile.

The route lay along the bank of a stream, strewed in places with blocks of different-coloured marbles. Several turns to the right, several zig-zags to the left, and we reached the foot of the ascent to the steep Kárá-teube Pass. Above, at an unattainable height, the mountain peaks still glistened under the golden rays of the sun, which had already set, and below, the gloom was ever darkening. Already we could no longer see the cheerful stream of water winding amongst the boulders strewed at the bottom of the bed; only the sound of its waterfalls and cascades bore witness to its presence.

The road commenced to ascend the hill by zig-zags; it rises here, so to speak, in terraces, one above the other. On both sides, to the right and left, are intermingled perpendicular cliffs and steep slopes, which in the darkness seemed bottomless, gaping precipices. Immediately afterwards the road ran along a path artificially cut on the shoulder of a rocky hill.

The General dismounted at this place and went on foot, supported under the arms by two Cossacks. Here is the summit of the pass. Here they say is an enormous stone brought from the valley by that mighty, beloved, and greatest of heroes of Central Asian events and legends—Ali. They say that the marks of the five fingers of his hand have remained on the stone. But perhaps it was owing to the darkness of the night that I could not perceive anything of this. Soon, however, the full moon rose above the sharp hill ridges, shedding its soft light on both hill and dale; but gloom still reigned in the deep gorges.

"Rajáb Ali! shall we soon get to the village of Kárá-teube?" the

voice of the General was heard to say when we had descended from the pass and had already ridden along the hill valley for half an hour.

"Az inja ta Kárá-tépé nim saat rah ast, General Sahib," replied our unwearied caravan-bashi (From here to Kárá-teube is half an hour's ride).

We rode on for half an hour, one hour, and still no village; not a sign of it.

"Rajáb Ali! According to my calculation we have already ridden a whole hour!" said the General angrily. "Shall we soon reach the village?"

"Immediately, General Sáhib."

We still continued riding for another good hour before we saw the fires in the distance.

Here is our camping ground. In an extensive, thick garden, with ancient elms, several tents and yúrts were pitched. A repast was served on tables, and the dessert on this occasion was supplemented by several bottles of wine. Since we had left Kábul, wine appeared now for the first time on our table. Having poured out a glass of wine, the General drank it off to the health of the Emperor, for that day, the 30th August (11th September), was his birthday.

In the meantime the Kemnáb was taken suddenly ill. It was interesting to notice that it left him as suddenly as it appeared. On reaching the camping ground he began to complain of pains in his stomach and weakness. I examined him and found nothing abnormal. The General showed himself sharper than I was. He called theKemnáb to his tent and advised him to drink some wine. The Kemnáb began to refuse it, quoting the edicts of the Korán; but he made his protest in such a tone that the General insisted all the more on his proposal. After the Kemnáb had drunk several glasses of wine, I did not hear any more complaints from him of pains in his stomach. On the 31st August (12th September) we started for Samarkand.

A grand reception was given to the Afghán embassy. They passed through the streets in which were situated the most remarkable memorials of the former Samarkand—memorials of the time of the Timúrides. Then when the Mission entered the Russian town, the artillery of the garrison fired a salute of thirty guns. The troops drawn up by battalions on the beautiful Abramov Boulevard received General Stolietov with a loud "hurrah." Then the Mission halted at the house of General Iványov, and the troops marched past him.

After a breakfast given to the Afghán Mission in General Iványov's house, they were quartered in the rich Samarkand district garden. In a few days the Mission left Samarkand for Táshkand.

On the 6th (18th) September, the Afghán Mission presented themselves to General Adjutant Von Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkistán. The audience was held in the most formal manner.

On the 10th (22nd) September, General Stolietov left Táskhand for Livadia to report on the action of the Mission to the Supreme Government.

The part of the Mission left in Kábul received the Imperial command to remain there until further orders.

Táskhand produced a great impression on our Afghán guests, but our troops and armament especially pleased them. Our copper breech-loading 9-pounders, however, did not satisfy them. Manœuvres of the

Táskhand garrison were specially held for them, when the troops were called out by the "Alarm."

Let us now glance at the Bámián route just traversed by us, the so-called "Royal route" or "King's highway" through the Hindu Kúsh.

First of all I must say that the foregoing expression "Bámián route through the Hindu Kúsh" is not quite a true one.

The Bámián route does not pass through the main chain of the Hindu Kúsh, but through a branch of it. But to assert, as, for instance, Cunninghame does, that the Bámián route not only does not cross the Hindu Kúsh, but circumvents it,* is evidently to take a very narrow view. West of the Khavak Pass, the real typical chain of the Hindu Kúsh suddenly breaks up into several almost parallel ranges, thrown off chiefly towards the north. These ranges systematically alternate with valleys, getting consecutively lower as they get further from the centre,—that is, from the main spinal chord of the system of the Hindu Kúsh. At the spot in this system through which the Bámián route lies, the alternation of ranges and valleys has a terrace-like character. Thus we see that Tásh-Kúrgán, which is at the beginning of the Bámián route at the extreme northern limit of the Hindu Kúsh, has an elevation of only 1,180† feet above the level of the sea; Haibak, which is 44 miles south of Tásh-Kúrgán, is already at an elevation of 4,000 feet. Between Khuram and the Rui plain is the first pass on the route to Bámián reaching a height of 7,000 feet. Then the locality gradually rises, and beyond Dúáb we have the first rather substantial pass of Kizil Kotal. Commencing from here the peculiar sharpness of the terrace-like upheaval of the mountain system under review is observed. Beyond this pass (about 9,000 feet) we have a valley nearly 7,000 feet in elevation, and beyond it again the Kárá Kotal Pass, 10,500 feet. The valley of Kahmard (about 6,000 feet) alternates with the Dasht-i-Kháshák Pass, 9,000 feet (according to Burnes). The following valley, Saigán, has an altitude of 7,000 feet; and the Ak Rabát Pass, separating this valley from that of Bámián, attains a height of 11,000 feet. The Bámián Valley and its branches, those of Kálu and Irák, situated at the foot of the snowy range of the Kúh-i-Bábá, are at an elevation of from 8,000 to 10,000 feet. Beyond these valleys follow the highest passes on this route.

Of these passes there are three groups (and perhaps more). The most eastern includes only one pass—the Shibarta,‡ over which Sultán Báber passed with troops 8½ centuries ago, on his return from his winter expedition against the Hazáras;§ the second group and also the centre one, that of Irák, comprises two passes, the Lesser and Greater Irák Passes (the first 9,000 feet, the second 13,000 feet). The third group, that of Kálu, also has two passes—the Kálu Pass, 13,000 feet; and Háji Khák, 12,400 feet. The last two groups of passes lead into the valley of the Helmand, which at Gardan-Diwár has an altitude of not less than 9,000 feet. All the three groups of passes are situated in the mountain knot joining the true Hindu Kúsh range with its western prolongation the true|| Kúh-i-Bábá.

* "Ancient Geography of India," page 25.

† The height given on the map attached to Colonel Kostenko's work, "The Turkistán Province," 1880.

‡ Or Shibar.

§ "Mémoire de Baber," page 441, &c.

|| Author says typical.—*Translator.*

Then the Unnai Pass again raises us from the valley of the Helmand to a height of 11,000 feet. The valley of the Kábul River, into which we descend from the last pass, falling at Jalríz to 7,000 feet, again leads us to the Safíd Kúh Pass, at a height of 8,000 feet. This pass is the last on the road to Kábul. I think that, from the figures given, the reader will be fully convinced of the terrace-like character of the Hindu Kúsh system in the tract under review. We thus see that on the route to Kábul *viâ* Bámián there are ten passes, and not six as Burnes and other English travellers state.

Notwithstanding the considerable elevation of the Irák, Kálu, and Hájí Khák Passes, they are not covered with eternal snow. It is only in December, January, February, and sometimes in March, that they are entirely covered with snow. But this is not always the case, as the reader will see in the second volume of my work.

In reviewing the passes of the Hindu Kúsh a question arises, and that too of the highest importance, *viz.*, as to their practicability. With regard to the passes on the Bámián route, the greater part of them in this respect present no special difficulties, but some of them are very inconvenient. The reader may see at the proper places in the text of this book in what these inconveniences consist.* The most inconvenient passes may be reckoned the Dasht-i-Kháshák (*i.e.*, really the Dandán Shikan ascent to it) and the Kárá Kotal, properly the descent from it into the Madair Valley.

The mountains at the points where they cross the Bámián route are entirely unwooded; nowhere is there either a tree or bush growing naturally; scanty alpine meadows cover the sides of the hills, and even they are quite burnt up in July and August.

In the mountain valleys the traveller, on the contrary, sees before him a luxurious picture of vegetation. This vegetation, however, is all grown artificially by the hands of men. Even here, however, this luxurious cultivation is kept within certain strictly-defined limits. Above 7,000 feet the vegetation consists chiefly of grasses. Here there are few trees. In the Bámián valley, for instance, the willow, poplar, and wild apple alone represent the tree section of the vegetable kingdom. But at the same time we see that barley grows successfully even at a height of 11,000 feet.

In conclusion, I will give the names of the halting stations in their order from the Amú-Darya to Kábul, giving the distance between them in versts. As a starting-point I take the village of Patta Guzar as the most convenient place for crossing the Amú-Darya in the region under review.

* I read with astonishment in Kostenko's work, "The Turkistán Province," the following statement on the subject of the practicability of the passes on the Bámián route: "According to the commandant of the Mission just returned, General Razgonov, the whole Bámián route generally from Tásh-Kúrgán to Kábul presents no difficulties to the movement not only of pack but even of wheeled transport."—Kostenko, Volume II, page 189 (Russian).

During the journey of the Mission in Afghánistán I often personally heard from General Razgonov quite a different opinion about the degree of practicability of the passes.

Name of place.	Distance in miles.	Remarks.
Patta Guzár .	...	A small village on the right bank of the Amú, inhabited by Turkumáns.
Siáhgírd . .	33⅓	Several caravansarais and extensive ruins; a few Uzbák families live here. There is little water, no forage; a bare sandy desert all round.
Mazár-i-Sharíf .	20	A town with a population of 20,000; the residence of the Luïnáb of the Chahár Viláyat.
Gúrimár . .	10⅔	A little place with a fortified barrack, occupied by Afghán troops. Water ample; few supplies.*
Naibábád . .	14	An extensive village with scanty vegetation, inhabited by Uzbáks; sufficient water, but very bad; little forage.
Tásh-Kúrgán .	16⅔	A town with a population of 30,000 Uzbáks and Tájiks. The fort is occupied by a few battalions of Afghán troops.
Sayád . .	10	A hill village in which Tájiks chiefly live. Forage. The River Khúlm.
Bád-i-siáb . .	17⅓	A village with sufficient forage; a broad irrigation channel.
Haibak . .	16⅔	An extensive village with an Uzbák and Tájik population. Abundant forage. The River Khúlm.
Sarbágh . .	20	A large village; many gardens and deserted houses; enough forage. The River Khúlm.
Khuram . .	8⅔	Inhabited by Uzbáks and Tájiks. Everything sufficient. The River Khúlm.
Ruí . . .	16⅔	A hill pasture ground and plain; corn-fields of various crops; a few miles off are villages. The River Khúlm.
Dúáb . .	18	A small village; inhabitants Tájiks. Little forage. Sources of the River Khúlm.
Madair . .	17⅔	A small village. Forage obtainable. The Madair stream.
Shash-burj .	17⅓	A beautiful valley with many fortified villages. Abundant forage. The River Kahmard.
Saigán . .	16	An extensive village, situated in a fertile valley; the inhabitants are Uzbáks, but there are also Tájiks. The Saigán stream.
Rig-i-nau . .	14⅔	A point; hardly any villages in the vicinity. There is water from stream, but no forage.
Bámián . .	22⅔	Site of our camp was a small poplar grove. Many fortified villages scattered about the valley; a mass of caves. Forage ample. The River Bámián.

* From Mazár-i-Sharíf to Kábul the distance between stations is given as in Benderski's route.

Name of place.	Distance in miles.	Remarks.
Muhammad Topchi.	12	A fortified village (fort). Forage obtainable. The River Bámián.
Irák Valley .	10⅔	In which there are many fortified villages. Forage obtainable. The Irák stream.
Kalah Kharzár .	23⅓	A fort. Very little forage. The Ab-i-Kharzár stream.
Gardan-Diwár .	14	A fort. Little forage. The River Helmand.
Sar-Chashma .	24	A village, partly occupied by Hazáras, partly by Afgháns. Sufficient forage. The sources of the Kábul River.
Koti Ashrú .	20	A large village, situated in the extensive Maidán Valley. Everything ample.
Kalah-i-Kází .	17⅓	A small fortified village. Everything ample. An irrigation channel.
Kábul . .	10	The capital of Afghánistán, with 60,000 inhabitants, on the river of the same name. To the north of it is a large lake.
	421⅓	

SIMLA;

The 12th September 1885.

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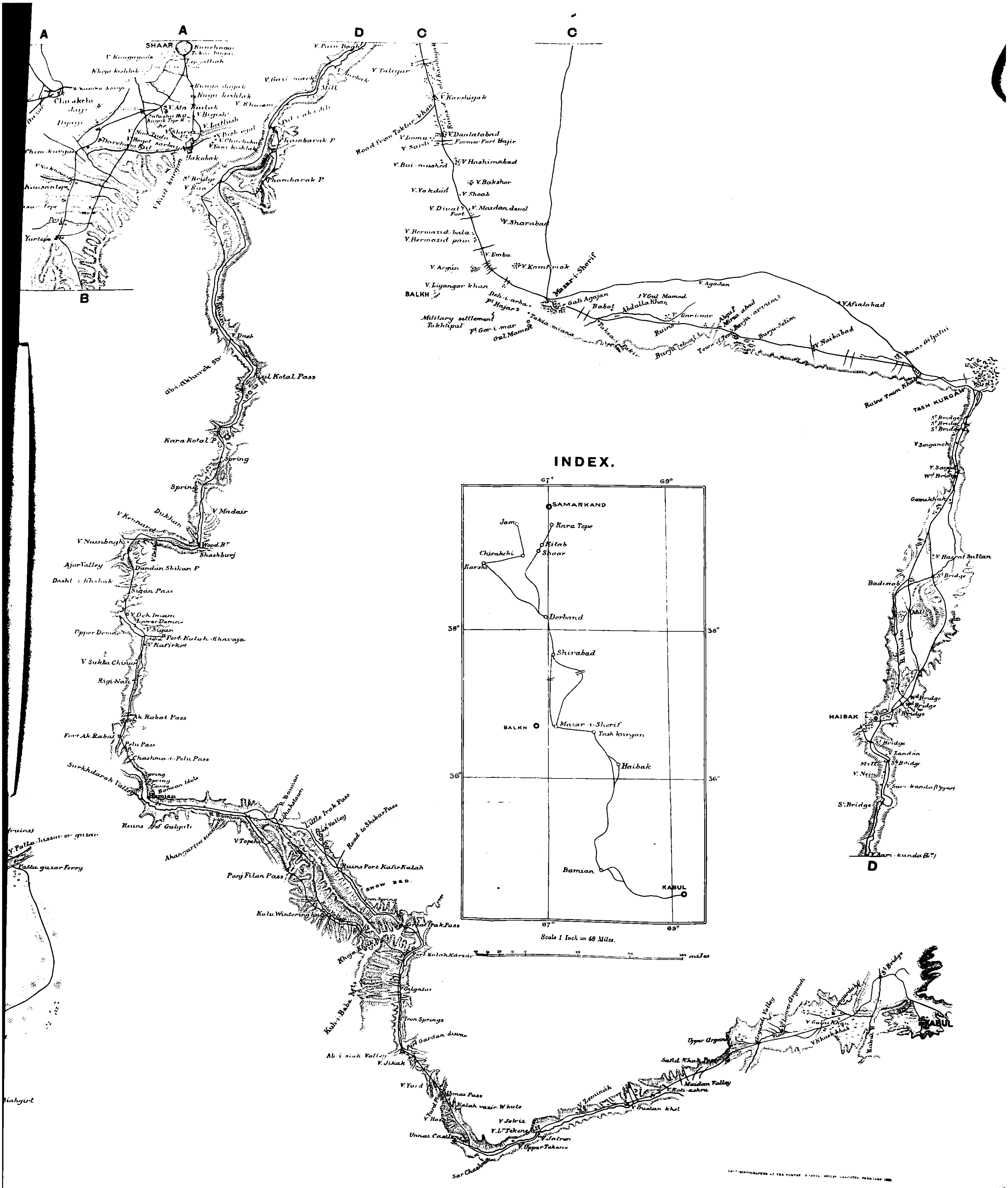
A
A
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C
SHAAR
Khoja kishlak
Chirakchi
Chim-kurgan
Yartepe
B
V. Ala Kulak
V. Bigish
Darcham Kul
Jakobak
Vkhil kurgan
St Bridge
Chambarak P.
Chamberak P.
V. Pain Bagh
V. Gazi-mark
Mill
V. Taligar
V. Karshiyak
Road from Toktur-khan
Ruins of old Karshiyak
V. Daulatabad
Former Fort Bajir
V. Hashimabad
V. Bai-mashed
V. Bakshor
V. Yakdari
V. Shoab
V. Mardan devel
Fort
V. Sharabad
V. Bermazid bala
V. Bermazid pain
V. Embu
V. Argin
V. Kamfiriak
V. Liyangar khan
BALKH
Deh-i-arba
Ft Hajar
Military settlement
Takhtipul
Ft Gor-i-mar
Gul Mamed
Mazar-i-Sherif
Gali Agajan
Rabat
Abdulla Khan
V. Gul Mamed
V. Agajan
V. Garimir
Takta-miana
Ruins
Mirza-abad
Burju-Selim
V. Afzalabad
V. Naibabad
Ruins Giljalui
Ruins Tram Khulm
TASH KURGAN
St Bridge
V. Saiganchi
V. Sayad
Wd Bridge
Gazukhak
V. Hazrat Sultan
St Bridge
Badinab
Mill
R. Khulm
Wd Bridge
Wd Bridge
St Bridge
HAIBAK
St Bridge
V. Zandan
Mill
St Bridge
V. Neju
V. Sari-kunda (Upper)
St Bridge
V. Sari-kunda (Lr)
D
V. Duab
Abi-Akhurek Str.
Kizil Kotal Pass
Kara Kotal P.
Spring
Spring
V. Madair
Dukhan
Wood Br
Shashburj
V. Naiabagh
Ajar Valley
Dandan Shikan P
Sigan Pass
V. Deh Imam
Lower Daman
Upper Daman
V. Sigan
Fort Kalah-Khavaja
V. Kafirkot
V. Sukka Chinar
Rigi-Nau
Ak Rabat Pass
Fort Ak Rabat
Pelu Pass
Chashma-i-Pelu Pass
Surkhdarah Valley
Spring
Spring
Caves
Bamian Idols
Bamian
R. Bamian
Ruins of Gulgula
Zohakstown
Little Irak Pass
Irak Valley
Road to Shibar Pass
V. Topchi
Ruins Fort Kafir Kalah
Panj Filan Pass
SNOW BED.
Iron Spring
Kulu Wintering huts
Great Irak Pass
Khoja Khak
Fort Kalah Karzar
Kuh-i-Baba Mts
Gulgatai
Iron Springs
Fort Gardan diwar
Ab-i-siah Valley
V. Jikak
V. Yurd
Unnai Pass
Kalah vazir. W.huts
V. Jalriz
V. Lr Tekana
V. Jalran
V. Upper Tekana
Unnai Castle
Sar Chashma
V. Zeminak
V. Gaslan khel
V. Koti-ashru
Maidan Valley
Safid Khak Pass
Upper Argandi
Argandi Valley
V. Lower Argandi
Chardeh
V. Galai Khan
V. Khush-khak
Kabul R.
St Bridge
KABUL
Patta-guzar Ferry
Biahgirt
INDEX.
67°
69°
SAMARKAND
Jam
Kara Tepe
Kitab
Shaar
Chirakchi
Karshi
Derband
38°
38°
Shirabad
BALKH
Mazar-i-Sherif
Tash kurgan
Haibak
36°
36°
Bamian
KABUL
67°
69°
Scale 1 Inch = 48 Miles.
miles


MISSION
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B
C
C
Karshi
V. Kanabad
V. Changil
V. Karalegin
V. Chuguldak
V. Zarobak
V. Yangi kent
V. Batash
Poyan Tepe Hill
V. Yalguchi
V. Poyan
V. Churagar
Chirakchi
Road from Guzar
SHAAR
Khoja kishlak
Kuju kishlak
V. Ala Kuluk
V. Bigish
V. Latlush
V. Bish ogul
V. Chachokai
V. Yani kishlak
Yakobak
Chim kurgan
Kausantepe
Kausar tepe
Yartepe
V. Pain Bagh
V. Taliyar
Mill
V. Khuram
Chambarak P.
Road from Toktar khan
BALKH
St Bridge
V. Rua
V. Dush
abi-Akhurek Str
Kizil Kotal Pass
Kara Kotal P.
Spring
V. Madair
V. Kennard
Dukhan
V. Naubagh
Wood Br
Shashburj
Ajar Valley
Dandan Shikan P.
Sigan Pass
V. Deh Imam
Lower Denna
Upper Denna
V. Sigan
Fort Kaluh Khavaja
V. Kafirkot
V. Sukla Chinar
Rigi-Nail
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Fort Ak Rabat
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SNOW BED.
Kulu Wintering
Kuh-i-Baba Mts.
DERBAND
The Iron Gates
Shauahu
Kara Khowal
Ak rabat
Dagh Kara Kent Pass
V. Saran
Chagatai Plain
V. Munch
Punjab ravine
Shadabai tugai W. Huts
R. Igarchi
Pash Khurd Range
Ak Kurgan
Shorsu Ravine
Mt Khatantai
Kandahan defile
SHIRABAD
R. Shirabad darya
V. Toguz gumbaz
V. Shahabad
V. Angar
Saidabad ruins
V. Nauakh
Dagh-i-Khoja
V. Bish kutan
V. Talashkau
Buz Robat
Kaftar (ruins)
Khan
Khaibar (ruins)
Ruins of the town Gulgul
Tomb of Sultan Abdu
V. Patta hissar or guzar
Patta guzar Ferry
R. Amu darya
V. Chushkaguzar
Shurtepe Hill
Ferry Chushkaguzar
V. Shurkh
Ziarat
Road from Balkh
V. Singurt
Siahgirt
V. Altin tepe
V. Dadabad
To Samarkand
Mt Cavazi Tau
Mt Kurgan Tau
V. Kara Tepe
V. Kizil bash
Mt Belek
Mt Pupanli
Mt Takhta karara
Takhta karara Pass
V. Kainar bulak
V. Kishlik
Mt Kara tepe
V. Golgun posh
KITAB

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RECONNAISSANCE

OF THE ROUTES

TRAVERSED BY THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL MISSION

BY

TOPOGRAPHER BENDERSKI

FROM JAM TO KABUL

AND BACK FROM KABUL TO SAMARKAND

during the years 1878 and 1879.

Scale 1 Inch = 5 Miles.