

the relief to the north! In the former direction the horizon kissed the great snowy mass which we had just climbed over by a pass situated at an altitude of 5337 m., and between it and us stretched a perfect labyrinth of minor ranges and crests rising one behind the other. In that same direction the landscape exhibited an extraordinary diversity of tints, the various shades of red predominating, while here and there we fancied we could discern little patches of yellow and green — grass and moss. Beyond and behind all gleamed out the snow-cap of the great snowy mountain, the culminating point of the entire scene. The whole was spanned by the pure blue vault of heaven — its colour also faint and evanescent. Nowhere did we see any sharpness or harshness of colouring; the distance toned down and subdued everything. This plateau scenery put me strongly in mind of the desert, and here also the desolateness was heightened by the deadly swoon in which these lofty regions appear to be wrapped. Apart from the tracks of wild animals there were no signs of animate existence; indeed, were it not for the tiny patches of yak moss, there would up in these altitudes be no organic life at all. A silence as of the grave on all sides, save for the whining and whistling of the west wind as it swept through the hills around, intensifying yet more the dreariness and the solitude. This country bears again no slight resemblance to the eastern Kuruk-tagh with its parallel crests.

A dry gravelly torrent led down from the pass, and soon entered a similar larger bed, the bottom of which was still moist from the stream which had recently died away in it. Camp XXX was pitched in a dry watercourse at an altitude of 5054 m. By digging down half a meter into its sandy bottom we came upon perfectly fresh water. Here again there was a fair amount of grazing, as well as jap-kak scrub. Next day near a spring that we found there were a great many partridges. At this camp we shot a couple of wild yaks.

During this stage the predominating rock was at first the usual brick-red sandstone; this was of course the cause of the prevailing redness of the landscape. But it nowhere cropped out as hard rock beside our route. In the side-glen however that led up to the pass we had a black, close-grained variety of rock, which though hard was generally severely weathered; this alternated with green schists. The only places where these rocks cropped out in the solid state were at the windings of the glen, where erosion had been at work. Generally speaking, the country consisted almost everywhere of extremely finely pulverised dust; this made going everywhere easy, as it readily supported the weight of our animals. At intervals it was dimpled with miniature hollows, all then quite dry, though a circle of salt round each showed that they sometimes do contain water. Far off in the east we still continued to see the great mass M<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub> of the year before, and it now appeared that the range which we had last crossed over forms the immediate continuation of the mountain-mass in question.

The stage of the 6th July took us across a rather monotonous, though remarkably easy country, with good firm ground underfoot. It was perfect summer weather; indeed we sometimes felt it uncomfortably warm. The watercourse beside which Camp XXX was pitched runs first towards the south-east, but soon inclines towards the east, and almost certainly finds its way into a salt lake lying south of M<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub>, which however was as yet invisible to us. We travelled for the most part