

June 23rd. It rained heavily during the night and this morning it was very cloudy. We followed up the river in a south-west direction for about ten miles, then crossing it where it flows due south and north, we continued in a westerly direction about two miles and camped near some pools of water at the foot of a line of low hills. Where we crossed the Murus to-day it was about two feet deep and probably seventy-five feet wide. This does not necessarily imply that we are far from the sources of this great river, as in this region a stream grows with wonderful rapidity. I traced up with my eye the course of the river for about ten miles, and could see numerous brooks emptying into it, quite enough to account for its volume where we crossed it. The Murus' ultimate source is certainly in the snows and ice on the Éken Habseré, which is very nearly south-west by south from our camp of this evening. A curious feature of the valleys of the Murus and of the Toktomai is the presence there of innumerable little pools or sinks, in which is collected all the water that falls in the valley bottoms and over a large area of the contiguous hills. These pools have no visible outlets into the rivers. To-day, for example, we certainly passed twenty-five such lakelets, some of them on the very bank of the stream.

June 24th. We made fourteen miles in a west-south-west by west direction up the valley of the Murus which we entered yesterday after crossing that river. There was a steady though hardly perceptible rise in the ground. The usual 2 p. m. thunderstorm visited us again to-day, and as usual also it came from the west. Since leaving the Ts'aidam we have never had a storm from another quarter.

June 25th. We are camping to-night at the head of the Murus valley in this direction, and at an altitude of 16,850 feet above sea-level. We have also reached the west end of the Dang la range. The country all the way here was of gravel, and for a few miles before making camp the ground was covered with grass-grown hummocks. The hills on either side of us are three hundred or four hundred feet high, but the main range to the north, which bends now in a slightly northerly direction, and is some five or six miles away, rises over two thousand feet above the surrounding country.

June 26th. We crossed the foothills of the Dang la, taking a west-south-west by west direction. In the first place, we passed six or eight miles south of a small lake, possibly three miles long, and which we called Dzurken ula nor . . . To our west, some twenty miles away, rose a short range of mountains with its central portion covered with snow . . . We have left the valley of the Murus behind; the water from all the surrounding hills south and west of us empties into the Dzurken ula nor. We are at last on the central plateau of North Tibet. From its flanks flow the Murus, the Salwen and half a dozen other great rivers, and here is also the eastern extremity of the great Central Asian Plateau. Away to the southwest there is a low ridge running westward and connecting the Dang la with another range of hills, but we have, as we hope, turned the great mountains. The snow peaks at whose base we are now camped are truly the »Head of the Dang la» (Dang la tolh'a). They rise apparently 2000 feet above the snow-line and as at least for 1000 feet above where we are camped (17,000 feet above sea-level) they are without snow, we must conclude that the line of perpetual snow in this region is at very nearly 18,000 feet above the level of the sea.