

we finally reached the narrow ridge which forms the pass at an elevation of about 14,600 feet, nearly seven hours after the start. The view from the pass was limited to the head of the large glacier over and past which the descent leads. But when we had proceeded about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles over this, zigzagging between many long crevasses, and had reached the lateral moraine opposite a point near which the ice stream turns to the NW., about 300 feet below the pass, we came upon the grand panoramic view which the photographs in Figs. 431, 432 reproduce. The farther descent led over trying slopes of lateral moraines covered with fresh snow. In the course of it fine views were obtained up side glaciers of great size which come in from the south (Fig. 428). At last, after a total march of over ten miles from the pass, the present end of the united ice stream was reached, where it falls off with a snout some 150 feet in height. About three miles below it the small grassy plateau of Ziginzau (about 10,500 feet elevation) offered a camping-place for the night.

Descent to
head of
Khingāb
valley.

On October 4th we descended by the stream coming from the Sitargh glaciers and reached by the evening the head of the long *Khingāb* valley at the village of Pashmghar. The first two miles led to the junction with the Burz-dara through a narrow gorge almost completely filled at its bottom by the stream or else by remnants of avalanches. After this it was an easy march. An abundant growth of large birch and juniper trees clothed the banks almost all the way and, together with fine grassy terraces above, bore witness to a moister climate. At an elevation of about 9,500 feet we passed the first actual cultivation, but traces of old terraced fields could be seen already some three miles farther up. Before arriving at Pashmghar, the highest village of any size in *Khingāb*, we had to cross the wide bed of the Garmo, the main feeder of the *Khingāb* river. It was a satisfaction to know that the previously unexplored valley of the Garmo had been carefully studied and surveyed in 1913 by a large and well-equipped expedition under Mr. W. R. Rickmers' leadership, right up to the southern foot of the mighty ice-crowned peaks which I had seen from above the Muk-su just two months before.⁹

Through
Wakhiā-
bālā.

From Pashmghar (about 8,500 feet elevation) two easy marches of some 35 miles altogether carried me to Lājirkh, at the western end of that portion of the *Khingāb* valley which is known as *Wakhiā-bālā*, the rest being reckoned as *Wakhiā-pāyān*. Throughout these marches we passed a succession of picturesque villages of small size, mostly situated on alluvial terraces above the right bank of the river and ensconced among orchards and arbours (Fig. 436). They looked prosperous notwithstanding obvious signs of maladministration, as carried on from Bokhāra; but much good land remained untilld, apparently through want of adequate labour. At the large village of Sangwār (7,400 feet elevation), where my camp stood for one night, there opens to the south the mouth of the considerable Mazār valley. Among the several passes which lead from its head to the Oxus Valley and to Wanj, the Vishkharwī pass was stated to be the only one practicable for laden animals, and even that not throughout the year.

Importance
of *Wakhiā-*
pāyān.

This shows that though *Wakhiā-bālā* with the rest of *Khingāb* appears to have belonged to Darwāz since medieval times, yet communication between it and the traditional seat of the chiefship at Kala-i-Khumb is certainly more difficult than it is with Kara-tegīn past the junction of the *Khingāb* river with the Surkh-āb. The greater importance of *Wakhiā-pāyān* in population and economic resources is shown by the statement of the well-informed 'Mīr-ākhur' of Lājirkh that in the days of the old Darwāz régime it was assessed for revenue as equal to *Wakhiā-bālā*, together with the valleys of Mazār and Sagridasht. According to the same informant, *Wakhiā-bālā* was reckoned at 500 households and the lower portion of *Khingāb* at 1,000. To the question of the earlier connexion of *Khingāb* and the adjacent valleys with Kara-tegīn we shall have to return farther on.

⁹ See *Geogr. Journal*, 1914, Feb., pp. 182 sqq.