

its right terrace, partly on the ice. Here was no open water. The road then climbs the steep slopes on the left side, where everything is covered with snow. The road is good, but if a pony slips, he is lost. At 1 o'clock p. m. we had a temperature of  $-17.6^{\circ}$ . The landscape is very picturesque. After a while we again go down by hundreds of zigzags, to the floor of the valley, where there is now neither ice nor water, only snow among the gravel. Then the road climbs the right slope, from where it goes down, crossing the main valley by a bridge, partly built, but mostly consisting of gigantic blocks in the bed. Finally we are able to keep to the gravelly floor of the principal valley where hard and compact snow fills all erosion beds and sometimes is covered by a thin layer of wind-driven dust and red sand. The valley turns to the N. E., north and N. W. From the left or east, several tributaries enter, but none of them looks promising for an attempt straight to the east. The valley is perfectly barren. Grass is seen nowhere. At *Burtse, Camp CCLXXXIII*, the name seems to indicate that a plant called *burtse* is to be found. Now nothing except snow could be had at this place.

If it were true, as my Ladakis asserted, that *Burtse* would be only two days from the *Kara-korum Pass*, we ought to have another pass in the same range east of *Burtse*, and at a distance of less than one day's march, as the range runs N. W.—S. E. But nobody among my Ladaki servants knew whether the valley which comes from the N. E. and joins the *Murgho* valley at *Burtse*, leads to such a pass, equivalent to the *Kara-korum Pass*, or not. So far as one of my men had been reconnoitring in the early morning, the passage was good, but he could not go sufficiently far up towards the crest. Still, in the hope of making a short-cut up on the *Chang-tang*, I decided to make an attempt. We were also lured by tracks of ponies readily visible, both in the gravel and in the snow, and, therefore, only a few weeks old.

On *December 20th*, we started for this, as far as my Ladakis knew, nameless valley. The distance to the uppermost point we reached was 16.6 km., and the altitude of the same point, 5,040 m. or 232 m. above *Burtse*, giving, therefore, the very moderate rise of 1:71. From this point to the crest of the range which must be very near, the ascent must be steep. The night had been perfectly clear and the cold severe,  $-29.1^{\circ}$  at 9 o'clock p. m., and  $-35.3^{\circ}$  as a minimum.

About half of the valley was snow-covered, the rest gravel, and higher up, ice from springs. The valley is enclosed between wild, rocky mountains. From the base of the living rock, steep screes slope down to the floor of the valley where gigantic blocks and boulders sometimes have fallen down. At a few places, the passage is very narrow. Higher up it is a gorge so narrow that one may touch the rocks at both sides simultaneously, which means hardly 2 m. We continued until we reached a place where the narrow passage was blocked up by boulders