

The next two days he marched between limestone rocks. The »plain», or, as on the map, Table Land, he describes, is Dapsang. He heard of an unfrequented road which was said to go directly to Khotan.

Again he reached what he calls the Shayok, found it to be 30 feet wide and ankle-deep and running from east to west. In reality this is only the eastern tributary of Shayok. On the authority of Yarkand merchants he says, »that formerly travellers used to ascend the Shayok from Sassar, in order to reach the Karakoram pass, instead of pursuing the circuitous route by which I travelled; but that about ten or twelve years ago the glaciers above Sassar descended so low as entirely to prevent any one passing in that direction, for which reason it became necessary to adopt a new road». Thomson makes a reference to MIR IZZET ULLAH'S journey which proved that then the road up the Shayok was open.

August 19th he reached the Kara-korum Pass and found its height, by boiling point thermometer, to be 18,200 feet. »On the crest of the pass the rock *in situ* was limestone.»

In Thomson's observations at the very place, the view of Humboldt: that the Kara-korum Pass was situated in the Kwen-lun, got a strong support. He describes the open plain to the south of the pass as occupying »a deep concavity in the great chain of the Kouenlun». ¹ He could distinctly see to the east the main range, a series of snowless, very lofty, black peaks beyond the sources of the most eastern branch of the Shayok; »while the heavily-snowed mountains, the summits of which were seen further east, were probably also a part of the axis of the chain, which apparently bends round the sources of the river of Khotan, or of some stream draining the northern flanks of the Kouenlun».

He observed the gradual rise of the snow-line to the N. E. and the occurrence of the highest peaks and greatest mass of snow — not on the main axis of the chain, but on its branches, as was also the case in the Himalayas, and this distribution of the snow he attributes to the Indian ocean in the S. W. Even up to 20,000 feet he did not find any continuous snow.

On his way back he visited the Kumdan Glaciers. The first was »most superb» and »entered the bed of the Shayuk at the bottom of a deep bend, and fairly crossed the river, which flowed out below the ice». The ice did not extend to the foot of the opposite rocks, but only a few feet up the left bank. A second glacier a mile higher up could not be crossed, nor could he ford the deep river in which the glaciers descended. Thomson went up a height »in order to see whether or not there was any lake in sight corresponding to that laid down, from information by Mr. Vigne, as Nubra or Khundan Chu. He could not, however, ascend sufficiently

¹ *Ibidem* p. 436.