

we only see the snowy buttresses, not the actual watershed . . . . The whole space to our left is a high irregular table-land, sloping up for thirty miles or so to the mountains to the east, which bound the upper Kara-kash.

From the S. E. an almost dry river bed joins the one from the Kara-korum Pass and goes N. W., forming the Yarkand River. The mountains, although he estimated them at 18,000 feet, looked like mere hills, on account of the elevation of the plateau from which they rise. At Chadir-tash north of the Kara-korum Pass he again parted with HAYWARD who went S. E.

Describing the slow rise to the Kara-korum Pass he has the following remarks of the range:

The so-called Karakoram Range might better be described as the raised edge of a basin, or the culminating part of an irregular plateau, than as a chain of mountains. The descent on the south side is greater, but you can hardly believe yourself to be on the watershed between the great river system which flows into the Indian Ocean and that which runs eastward towards China.

Again he remarks that the heights on the sides are like hills and there is no snow. A day's march south of the pass, however, you come to real glacier mountains. The Shayok rises »in a perfect ocean of ice; there are two glaciers which unite and overflow a large plain. There are the marks of a lake which has repeatedly been formed here by the glaciers blocking up the ravine below and which caused such devastation by the cataclysm of 1841.» As we know, the cataclysms of the Indus originated from quite another cause.

Shaw continued his way down through narrow gorges in what he calls the broken edge of the table-land. Then, after some fords, he gives us an important bit of information about the Kumdan-glaciers.<sup>1</sup>

The most difficult of these fords was caused by a huge glacier called Koomdan, whose nose protruded from a side valley, with pinnacles and seracs, some of which were quite 200 feet high, glistening like sugar . . . . Some three miles below this, another glacier blocked the way. After careful examination we discovered that the passage was entirely closed for horses, as the ice had in the last three months (since the passage of one of my guides, three months before) advanced as far as the opposite cliffs, tremendous lime-stone precipices, while the river forced its way under it through a kind of tunnel.

He had to send his horses by a five days' way over the mountains, whilst he passed the glacier tongue with some of his servants. On the other side they were attacked by a sudden inundation but found refuge on a rock in mid-water. Thus the Kumdan road was nearly closed in 1869. In the upper course of the Shayok there are little heaps of débris on the river-terraces; they consist of slate rock.

Now the formation of the mountains in this neighbourhood is granite and gneiss, and slate is not met with till near the head of the river, some eighty miles up. The natives, when asked for an explanation of this, say that these heaps were brought down

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 433.