

has almost blocked up, the only passage being through the stream, that has worked its way through the glacier, where it struck the opposite cliffs of the valley.»¹

Forsyth's second mission was on a much bigger scale than the first. He now travelled as an Envoy and Plenipotentiary of the Queen to the Court of Yakub Bek, the famous Atalik Ghazi. The purpose was to conclude a commercial treaty with this ruler of Alti-shahr or Eastern Turkestan. By Colonel YULE (Sir Henry) the envoy was supplied with all possible information regarding the unknown countries of Central Asia, and hints and suggestions as to the inquiries that were to be made. The expedition was not merely a diplomatic one, it consisted also of a staff of distinguished officers and naturalists, and geography could, therefore, expect a harvest of very valuable new information. Nearly all of these members later on became famous in the history of Asiatic exploration: Lieutenant-Colonel T. E. GORDON, Dr. BELLEW, Captain CHAPMAN, Captain TROTTER, Captain BIDDULPH, Dr. STOLICZKA, and several orientals.

BIDDULPH, TROTTER and STOLICZKA were sent in advance, July 15th, 1873, from Murree to Shahidullah. The head-quarters' party reached Leh September 20th, and left it on the 29th. They first crossed, in the Kardong-la, the Kardong Range, which »separates the valley of Ladak from that of the Shayok River. It is composed of gneiss and granite.»² Beyond Tirit the valley is an open river channel between bare hills of schist and granite and gneiss. The hot springs of Panamik had a temperature of 167° and 174° F. They crossed the Karaul-davan (14,550) and passed lofty granite mountains on the road to Brangtsa, over the Saser they wandered three miles over glacier ice (17,270). At the Shayok, on the other side of the pass, the caravan divided, the heavy luggage being sent with Mr. JOHNSON by the Murghu and Dapsang road.

The next stage took the envoy and his officers to Kumdan. They descended to the bed of the Shayok, followed it upwards and had, during two hours, eight or ten crossings of the river, after which they

came to a glacier lying right athwart the valley which runs in a north-west direction. We here entered a narrow lane between vertical walls of white marble rocks on one side and bottle green glacier on the other, and for one hour went up its stream, crossing from side to side in continual succession over narrow ledges in the ice, and through the water by breaks in it, alternately hugging the rock, and sliding against the smooth glacier, till finally we emerged upon the valley beyond; and then, going on for a mile or so, we camped on a raised beach of shingle under a sheer wall of white marble only a few hundred yards ahead.

The glacier ahead of us is seen winding down a long valley of which it fills the hollow just like a solid river, and at its top, many miles away to the west, rises a very

¹ *Autobiography*, p. 100.

² H. W. Bellew, *Kashmir and Kashgar, a narrative of the Journey of the Embassy to Kashgar in 1873—74*. London 1875, p. 144 *et seq.*