

the principal bulk of the mighty Kuen-lun.» This view is rather to fall back upon HUMBOLDT'S and RITTER'S standpoint which had been abandoned some 40 years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Saser-la he says is 17,800 feet high. At its eastern foot he camped on the Shayok at a place he calls Sirsil. From there he went up on the right bank of the river. Eight times he had to cross it, but never had more water than to the saddle, or so as to make the luggage wet. The guides went in front and measured the depth with poles. Very little snow was seen on the mountains around — as is usual in the middle of summer. But at some versts from Sirsil, on the right side of the river, rises the magnificent snow-group Ak-tash, the height of which he estimates to be 24,000 feet.

Then comes the most interesting passage in his narrative, regarding the Kumdan Glaciers:<sup>2</sup>

From it (Ak-tash) a long but narrow glacier is stretching down in the valley, providing with water a wild brook, which falls into the Shayok. Some 16 versts beyond it one finds the colossal glacier Chum-Khumdan, the sources of which are to be found in the mountains which are situated far to the west. All these glaciers proceed to the very bottom of the valley, having their lowest edge at a height of 15,300 to 15,700 feet over the sea. The front edge of Chum-Khumdan has a breadth of about one verst and is broken off in vertical ice-walls, being 30 to 40 sashen in height. Near its end the glacier represents an accumulation of colossal ice blocks, some of which have taken extraordinary original and capricious forms. From under the glacier a brook is streaming, joining with the river and at some places covered with ice; an ice-covering is also beginning already here on the Shayok, which from here becomes much smaller.

He camped above the glaciers at a height of 15,800 feet. There is not a word of any difficulties in passing between the front of the glaciers and the right bank of the river, and only the next days he went over to the left bank. From this description we may conclude that the glaciers in 1898 ended at about the same point as in 1892 as described by GRENARD. It is curious that Novitskiy mentions

<sup>1</sup> When I passed through St. Petersburg in 1899 starting on my expedition to Eastern Turkestan and Tibet, 1899—1902, General O. VON STUBENDORFF had the great kindness to provide me with several maps of the interior of Asia, amongst others the sheet »Leh, Simla, Dehli» of the large map of the regions situated to the south of the boundary of Asiatic Russia. (*Карта Южной Пограничной Полосы Азиатской России. Издание Военно-Топографическаго Отдѣла Глав. Штаба. 1898.*) The sheet which was very important for my purposes had not yet been published, so I only got it in proof. Only a part of the Kuen-lun System had so far been drawn. As to the Kara-korum a curious mistake has been made. The draftsman has not known that the expression Karakoram Mountains of the British-Indian map which he has obviously used as a source, belonged to a mountain system, for he has made two districts out of the name, the one to the west called Каракорамъ (Karakoram), and the one to the S. E. of it, called Моунгайнсъ (Mountains). He has believed that the English word Mountains was the Turki name of a district! And still Lieutenant-General Stubendorff, Major-General Bolsheff and, the constructor of the map, Vasilieff, have their names printed on the sheet. One gets the impression that, in 1898, none of the officers of the topographic department of the General Staff understood English. Between the two »districts» we find, however, Пер. Каракурумъ or the Kara-korum Pass with the altitude of 18,550 feet.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 131.