

Pushing up rapidly by the route over the Ulughat-Dawan and Brinjak pass discovered in 1900, we reached the Nissa valley after the middle of August, and were soon busily engaged mapping the huge ice-streams which descend towards its head both from the main Kun-lun watershed, and great side spurs thrown out by it northward.

The effects of far-advanced disintegration of rocks, due evidently to extremes of temperatures, were everywhere most striking. The precipitous ridges we had to climb . . . were composed on their crests of nothing but enormous rock fragments . . . and quite bare of detritus from circ. 14,000 feet upwards. Enormous masses of rock débris sent down from these ridges almost smothered the ice-streams below, and made their surface look for miles like that of huge dark torrents suddenly petrified in their wild course. Big ice falls and gaping crevasses showed indeed that these accumulations of débris were being steadily carried onwards by the irresistible force of the glacier beneath. But even there the exposed ice surface looked almost black, and when on the Otrughul glacier I had under serious difficulties clambered up for some 5 miles from the snout to an elevation of circ. 16,000 feet, the reaches of clear ice and snow descending in sharp curves from the highest buttresses of a peak over 23,000 feet high seemed still as far away as ever.

The rate at which these glaciers discharge at their foot the products of such exceptionally rapid decomposition as appears to proceed along the high slopes of this part of the Kun-lun where permanent snow does not protect them, was brought home to me by the almost constant rumble of boulders sliding down the ice wall at the snouts whenever the sun shone through long enough to loosen the grip of the surface ice. Old moraines of huge size could be traced clearly at the head of the Nissa valley down for over 3 miles below the present foot of the Kashkul glacier, at circ. 13,300 feet elevation. Thick layers of loess deposited since ages by heavy clouds of dust as we saw again and again swept up by the north wind from the great desert plains north had charitably covered up these ancient terminal moraines.

The form of the valleys, the rocks and the detritus told plainly the story of rapidly progressing erosion, and the melting of the glacier was proceeding at a great rate; the flooded condition of the rivers made the journey difficult.

Stein speaks of a »difficult route across the main Kun-lun Range, by which communication with Ladak was maintained for a few years during the short-lived rule of the rebel Habibullah (1863—66), and which has long ago become completely closed and forgotten».

When he went down to the valley of Pisha, he had succeeded in clearing up many interesting details of orography in the rugged, ice-covered main range rising south of the Yurung-kash, and in establishing beyond doubt that that long-forgotten route led up the Chomsha valley.

It had become equally certain that any advance through that very confined valley to its glacier-crowned head was quite impracticable during the summer months or early autumn. I also convinced myself that my long-planned attempt to reach the uppermost sources of the Yourung-kash itself would have to be made from the east.

His previous explorations in the Karangu-tagh region had convinced him that the upper Yurung-kash could not be approached through the deep gorges in which the river has cut its way westwards. This could be done only from the east through