

gradually choked with ice at the beginning of the previous winter, the stream had overflowed and frozen in a huge sheet. In melting, the edge of the ice broke off in a little cliff from three to five feet high, which the horses dared not attempt; so the only open path was in the water.

We had no difficulty with the fords because the weather for a few weeks previous had been unusually cloudy, so that but little snow had melted. Among the lofty mountains of the arid regions of Central Asia, as we saw and were told again and again, floods are rarely or never due to the influence of rain upon melting snow, as so often happens with us in America and Europe, but rather to the rapid melting of the snow under the powerful rays of the unveiled summer sun. The rain among lofty mountains, as is well known, is usually a cold drizzle with little melting power; while the sun, shining undimmed through the clear thin air, is extraordinarily hot. May 28 was a cloudy day, and a little wet snow fell in the evening. We pitched our camp that night on the right side of the Shyok River, a clear, rushing stream thirty feet wide and a foot deep. In the morning, we traveled diagonally across the cobble-strewn flood-plain, here about half a mile wide. It was seamed with numerous dry channels. Some time after we had come to the farther side, it suddenly occurred to me that we had not crossed the river. I waited till Mr. Barrett came up, and asked:—

“Have you crossed the river this morning?”

He could not remember having done so, and neither could the men. We looked again, but there was no river. Yet even as we were talking about it, a new stream came foaming down a dry channel, a red muddy flood of freshly melted