

Jum Yung, the Tibetan, who was in the habit of running and singing a great deal when he took care of the horses, "is already out of breath."

When I told Ramazan that the trouble with the air was not due to poison, but to the height of the pass, he could not understand how that was possible.

"This pass is not high," he said. "You will see when we come to it that the climb is short and gentle. Zoji La [the pass between Kashmir and Ladakh] is much higher, but there is nothing the matter with the air there."

I explained that we had been climbing gradually for many days, and were now at a great elevation.

"You have traveled far and read many books," he answered, only half convinced, "and I suppose you know; but when we have to climb hard to get to a pass, we call it high, and when the climb is easy, we call it low. So we think that Zoji La [11,400 feet] is high, and Karakorum [18,300 feet] low."

At this time, having left the canyon of Shyok and that of its tributary, the Murgo, we were among the broad open valleys and gently domed mountains of the central part of the plateau. Traveling would have been easy, if it had not been for the great altitude and the almost utter absence of vegetation. The horses suffered from hunger in spite of their generous rations of grain. The animals of any caravan not well equipped with grain become pitiably weak and die by scores. Along most of the route from Leh to the Sanju pass, carcasses were so abundant that the vicinity of the road had become the haunt of the dismal carrion-eating crow, or raven. At least, when we left the road the ill-starred birds