

They were ahead with the rest of the caravan, so he thought. The next day, in the dazzling glare of six inches of new snow, the men found one of the animals, but the other with its load of food and clothes never appeared. Probably there were four hundred and seventy-five ponies dead on the road instead of four hundred and seventy-four.

For the next ten days the weather was bad, with snow almost every day. Rasul grew sober.

"I not seeing what for we having this bad weather," he remarked in his Kashmiri English. "We not opening that bag date. He making open when we coming. Every horse, dog, donkey could eating. This road's rule is every man taking all thing from bag when he finding open. That bag open heself. We not making. But this bad weather coming after we taking date. Perhaps Allah making very angry. I plenty wishing we not taking."

Our misfortunes were not serious. The worst was that we lost six days in a vain attempt to force a passage across the ice and snow of the unexplored Hindu Tash pass in the Kwen Lun range, leading directly to Nissa and Khotan. Between the Karakorum plateau and the Kwen Lun range lies the valley of the upper Karakash River, habitable for nomads, but not for people who practice agriculture. Here we found a few Khirghiz, who put their yaks at our disposal, and in every possible way helped us in our attempt to cross the Hindu Tash. Leaving the horses to follow us later if our attempt proved successful, we essayed the pass. The yaks, splendid strong creatures, which never stumbled and never hurried or grew nervous in the steepest, most precarious places, bore us up to a height of 17,000 feet. When