

Peas and wheat are grown and the crop was said to be no more than twofold! From the last village the ascent became steep, in some places very steep. After a climb of 1 1/2 miles along a zigzag road we reached the highest point, a ridge overshadowed by a high mountain immediately on the right and others further off on the left. Its name was given as Tien-shan-tzu (Tien = bow), but whether the Chinese simply call the mountain by the name of a small village just beyond or vice versa, I cannot tell. The barometer indicated an ascent of about 1,100 metres in about 12 miles, a large part of which was over level ground.

A very wide view was unfolded from the mountain. The landscape that spread out northward at our feet was in the nature of a great number of gigantic tongues, the main direction of which was S—N, divided by deep clefts. They fell in large terraced stairs to the north and towards the clefts. There were some tilled areas on these very level terraces. On the slopes we could see a couple of small villages, but even these did not relieve the monotonous yellowish-grey colour. In the S, SE and SW there was nothing visible but mountains and deep clefts either higher or as high as the one on which we stood. None of them reach the snowline, although some of them were covered with snow just now. The main direction seemed to be E—W. A village of about a dozen small huts stood on the mountain at about the same height as the highest point that we had passed.

The very steep descent was also along a narrow and slippery ledge. Slipping and sliding, we clambered down into a deep valley and then again halfway up along the steep slope of a spur of rock. From this we finally reached the bottom of another big valley which we followed for the rest of the day's journey, i.e. for 2 or 3 miles. A frozen river, a couple of yards wide, wound eastward along the bottom. Having covered about 16 miles we came to the little village of Kut'an at a place, where the cleft grew slightly wider. The village contains 14 houses. The inhabitants were very inquisitive, but friendly and obliging. All were Chinese. Peas, oats, barley, tchumiza, and potatoes are grown, potatoes being the principal food of the local people. All the tillage was dependent upon the rainfall. The average crop was said to be 6 fold. There are no burans, but strong SW winds are common, especially in spring. Snow falls between the 8th and 4th Chinese months, but seldom remains on the ground.

*March 18th.* A slight fall of snow began in the evening and continued throughout the night and to-day until soon after midday. The country again looked quite wintry when we started and the snowstorm prevented our seeing much of the surrounding mountains. We continued along the same valley which now proceeded in a direction due south. Scarcely 1/3 of a mile from the village the lowest spurs of the mountains ran into each other and for about 2/3 of a mile we once more went along a narrow cleft that led up towards the slope of the mountain. In the S the mountains enclosing the valley on two sides joined each other. After a short, but steep ascent we reached their summit here at a point slightly lower than the mountains in the E. We were now about 150 metres higher than at the top of the Tien-shan-tzu mountain. Unfortunately, the snowstorm prevented us from establishing our position in the maze of mountains that surrounded us. On the right, two narrow and deep valleys opened up towards the W. Skirting these,