

very high and precipitous hill just above Changlung village. The road ascends by a zigzag and rises rather more than 4,000 feet in a length of about five miles, the stiffest bit of ascent on the whole journey to Yárkand. After reaching the top of the *Karawal* Pass (so called from a karawal or outpost erected many years ago at this spot to enable the Ladakhis to defend their country from invasion from the north) the road descends into the Sásér stream and then passes up it to the Sásér La, a pass over a mighty ridge covered with snow and glaciers which runs down from the great mountain mass forming the eastern extremity of the so-called Kárákorum Range and separates the waters of the Nubra\* from those of the Shyok. This pass (17,820 feet) is one of the most difficult on the whole road, and is rarely, if ever, free from snow, while the road passes through, over, and alongside of glaciers for many miles.† The road from the top of the pass follows the bank of a stream which enters the Shyok River at Saser Polu, a halting place on the winter road. The Shyok is here crossed with difficulty, as is proved by the fact that two Ladakhis were drowned there when returning from laying out supplies for our return journey.

The road now ascends a tributary stream on the left bank of the Shyok crosses a low pass, and at Murghi Camp joins another stream which flows from the Dipsang plains into the Shyok River. It was at this point, at a height of 15,200 feet, that the late Dr. Stoliczka breathed his last, after having traversed the Kárákorum Pass and the perhaps still more trying Dipsang plains which rise to an elevation of about 18,000 feet above the sea. The intense cold of this bleak and dreary waste prevents this route from being adopted in winter, during which season the caravans follow the Shyok River from Saser Polu up to Daulat Beguldi (Turki for "Daulat Beg died," an appropriate name for so desolate a spot). This camp, which is situated in the north-west corner of the Dipsang plain, marks the junction of the winter and summer routes, which unite here, and cross the Kárákorum Pass 11 miles above the camp, continuing together a distance of 40 miles further to Ak-tágh. The Kárákorum Pass, though 18,550 feet above the sea, is by no means so formidable an obstacle as is generally supposed. It is always free from glaciers, and in summer from snow. The ascent on both sides is gentle, and the road good, so that, although it forms the water-shed between Hindústán and Central Asia, it is less of an obstacle to the merchant than the Digar, the Khardung, the Saser or the Sanju Passes. From it the road passes along the Kárákorum stream (one of the headwaters of the Yárkand River) to Ak-tágh, traversing the comparatively open ground on the west of the Karatágh ‡ plain. At Ak-tágh the roads again diverge, the winter route continues down the Yárkand river, which is crossed 18 times between Ak-tágh and Kúlúnaldi, § a distance of 74 miles. At the latter place this road ascends the range that was called by Hayward the western "Kuen Luen,"\* and crosses it by the Yangi-Diwan (or "New Pass," 16,000 feet) into the Tiznáf River, which it follows for 41 miles to Chiklik. The road is here taken over one of the northern spurs of the Kuen Luen by the "Tupa" || or Ak-Korum Pass (10,470 feet), whence it descends along the banks of a gently sloping stream to Kugiar, a considerable village (containing 400 or 500 houses) on the borders of the plains of Eastern Turkestan, and 41 miles distant from Karghalik, a large town situated at the junction of the Zamistáni (via Kugiar), and the Tabistáni (via Sánjú) routes. It was by the Kugiar road that the Mission returned to India. The road had been closed for several years previously by order of the Yárkand authorities owing to the risk to which travellers were exposed of being plundered and sold into slavery by the wild Kanjud robbers (of Hanza and Nagar), who coming down from their fastnesses to the north of Búnji and Gilgit used to render the whole valley of the Yárkand

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\* At the head of the Nubra valley a road passes over the main Kárákorum chain by the Chorbut Pass and descends into the Yárkand river at Khufelong. It was formerly much used by the Baltistan merchants, but is now rarely employed. It is probably not less than 19,000 feet high, and is always closed for at least nine months in the year, and is at no times practicable for laden animals.

† On the return journey of the Mission several hundreds of coolies were employed for some weeks in preparing the road over this pass.

‡ "Karatagh"="Black Mountain."

§ "Kulunaldi"="the wild horse died."

|| In Turki Tupa means "hill," and Ak-Korum "white gravel."