

either side. The view was very limited, and the deep snow prevented my leaving the road. On our return journey, about five weeks later, the snow was all melted, and there was no necessity for employing yaks.

The camp at Chehil Gombáz was at the junction of the streams coming from the Kaskasú and Torat\* Passes, the two forming the Chárling River, along which a direct road goes to Yárkand, now closed against traffic "by order." On the spur between the two streams is an old Chinese building called Khitai Sháhr (Chinese city), a sort of square redoubt built on the steep slope of the hill, presenting a very curious appearance, and reminding one of the perspective pictures of Cæsar's camp, in ancient editions of that author's Commentaries. It was said to have been formerly held by a detachment of Chinese, posted to watch the Chárling passage to Yárkand.

The direct road from Chehil Gombáz to Yárkand† is 132 miles in length. The first march is to Tashkerim, a camping ground 19 miles down the Charling stream. From this place a path crosses the hills to the north, joining at Kinkol, the road we had ourselves followed. The Yárkand road continues down stream for 15 miles to Khaizak passing the villages of Bagh (30 houses), Kiok-tash (8 houses), Mirgul (25 houses), and Joya (15 houses). Between Chehil Gombaz and Bagh (the highest village in the valley) are numerous Kirghiz tents, the grassy valley affording an abundant pasturage to large herds of sheep and cattle, which remain in the valley in the cold weather, but are driven up to higher grazing grounds in the summer. Leaving the Charling stream at Khaizak, the road crosses two low spurs by the Kara Diwan and Kizil Diwan (on which there was no snow in April), and then descending to the bed of the Kizil stream‡ passes over plain and through desert § to Yakirak Kurghan, from which place to Yárkand 23½ miles further on, is a rich, thickly populated, and fertile plain. The Charling and Tashkurghán Rivers unite at Khusherab, five or six miles below Khaizak; the united stream then flows nearly due east, and is said to be met by a still larger river the Raskam (from the Karakorum Pass), at Kosherap, about 20 miles south-south-west of Yakirak.

On the sixth day (26th), we made a short march of only eight miles to Pas Robát, crossing the Pas Robát or Torat (horse's sweat) Pass, which divides the drainage of the Chárling River from that of the Tangitár, which also flows into the Yárkand river. The ascent was steep, and the descent still more so, the slope of the valley being 16° for a distance of about two miles. The height of the pass is 13,130 feet, the rise from Chehil Gombáz being about 3,000 feet, and the fall to Pas Robát about 4,000. While we were on the top the sky was cloudy and a fall of snow obscured the peaks to the north. On the return journey, however, I ascended a hill north of the pass and had a good though limited view in every direction. The ground rapidly rises towards the north and north-west, peaks rising to a height of as much as 4,000 feet above the pass, *i.e.*, to over 17,000 feet. The mountains eastward visibly decreased in height as they approached Yárkand. On my 2nd visit the hills near the pass were covered with fresh, low, short, grass.

About half way down to camp we came upon a number of willow trees (Túrkí, Sugét), which continued in greater or less quantities down to the foot of the hill. In descending the stream we came upon some very thick river deposits having in places a thickness of 300 feet, and containing large boulders of syenite. The rock *in situ* was composed of the same materials, as that through which we had been passing for several days, *viz*: shales and slates.

A stream coming from the north-west had a temperature of 42°, while the temperature of the air was only 24°.

On the seventh day we continued our march up the Tangitár (Pas Robát) River; after five miles we passed on the left bank the Yámbulák stream leading to the pass of the same name, 14 miles off, situate in a direction a little north of west. Our own path lay along the main

\* Torat or "horse's sweat."

† This road was traversed by Kishen Sing Pandit from whom the information contained in this paragraph is derived.

‡ Nearly dry in winter, but a large torrent when the snow is melting on the hills above.

§ Called "Shaitán Kum" or "Devil's sands."

Kanjorab