

## CHAPTER VIII

Earthquakes—Raskam—Fording Yarkand River—Bazar Dara—  
Approach to Kukalung Pass—Zad—Recrossing Kukalung Pass  
—Camp at 16,000 feet—Incorrect maps—Description of country  
—Illness of Dalbir Rai—Approach to Sandal Dawan—Bivou-  
acking on mountain-side—Dysentery—Easy marches—Arrival  
at Yarkand.

**B**Y this time, however, Changfûnchuk had reported that the Ilisu route, though beset with greater difficulties than that by Issok Bulok, was quite practicable. Consequently I had a choice of routes, and a comparison of their respective advantages led me to choose that which Changfûnchuk had investigated. Its merit was that it led to the west end of Raskam, and would save two days' march as compared with the Issok Bulok route. The Tajiks, perceiving that I was not to be deterred by false reports, began to yield, and, while alleging dread of earthquakes, supplied me with transport but no guides.\*

\* Public orders had been issued by the Taotai at Kashgar not only that no opposition was to be offered to me on my journey, but that every assistance was to be rendered to enable me to travel wherever I wished. But it was subsequently ascertained that, secret orders had been given to the Chow-Kuan at Tashkurghan cancelling the public orders, and enjoining that I should be dissuaded by reports of roads blocked by landslips caused by earthquakes, but that, if I proved obstinate and resolved to proceed to Raskam, transport might be supplied, but no guides on any account.