

heads to the ground implored me not to pass their village. They assured me that the road was bad, the inhabitants few, and supplies almost impossible to obtain. I told them that I was going to Nosh Tung at the junction of the Mariong and Yarkand Rivers, and hurried past them as they asserted that this was Nosh Tung. I had gone some distance and was out of sight of the villagers when I found that I must wait for the caravan. So slow had been the progress of the animals that, in spite of my resolution to proceed, I had to go back and spend the night at the village. This, on the whole, was fortunate, for, as I afterwards found, the track leading down the valley was bad, in some places so bad as to be quite impassable in the dark.

Having made the usual astronomical observations, I renewed my effort to elicit information concerning routes towards Raskam, but again I failed, every one asserting that there were none. Then I informed the Ming Bashi that I was not to be baffled, but that I should remain at the village and draw on its inhabitants for supplies, fuel, and forage till I saw my way to success. In the morning, Ram Singh ascended a commanding peak a little above the Sargon Pass, and obtained a wide view, including many points which had been fixed by me. Accompanied by Abdul Karim and one of the caravan men, who looked after the pony carrying the theodolite, I descended the valley to its junction with that of the Yarkand River. A little below the village we passed a hot spring, the temperature of which was over 130° F., above which point my thermometer was not graduated. Below the springs the valley narrowed almost to a gorge with steep, barren mountains rising on either hand. The river was in some places half frozen; near its mouth, on both banks, stood trees, apparently half dead; altogether the country had a dismal look. A little further on the wide and now