

of demerit, but this execrable drop, or "chute," if not absolutely the worst descent I ever became acquainted with, was certainly surpassed in vileness by none.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we reached the two stone huts of Pilipert, whose distance in a straight line from Chadder Tash did not exceed four miles. The caravan, consisting of a few yaks, ponies, and donkeys, with men in sufficient numbers to render all assistance that could be given, had taken nearly eight hours to the march.

One of the small flat-roofed huts, through the walls of which the biting wind blew as easily as through a sieve, was occupied by a few men in charge of about sixty yak, the herd being brought every winter to graze. The place was 13,850 feet high, but possessed abundant grass. At this spot we found that four routes met—viz., that by which we had just travelled, one leading from Kulan Urgi, and a third and fourth to the west end of Raskam. During the evening there was unusual excitement and hubbub among the yak-men while they discussed among themselves the choice of my next route. Their opinions and counsels were divided, but I was too busy with my observations and computations to pay any attention to them, and when my work was completed quiet had been restored in the company.