

valley we could see that the ground was white and evidently impassable for ponies and donkeys. I therefore resolved to send the greater part of the caravan, comprising most of the men, all the ponies and donkeys, and all the spare baggage and food, to the Kulan Urgi valley to wait as near Issok Su Agzi as the supply of grass in the neighbourhood would allow, while Ram Singh and I, accompanied by Abdul Karim, Dass, Mohammed Joo, and Sonam, under the direction of the yak-men, would follow the track of the Kirghiz. The yak were six in number, and these were represented as sufficient to carry the two tents (which on the journey proved only burdensome, not useful), the instruments, the bedding, food, cooking utensils, and, as the weather was very severe, an abundant stock of clothing and rugs. In the evening, seated at my tent door, with the thermometer at about 0° F., I found it necessary to labour at my computations, consulting logarithmic tables and the Nautical Almanac, and at the same time to superintend the weighing of the packages and the issuing of rations for the separate travelling parties. When these various duties had been accomplished, and when I had given instructions for next morning to Yul Bash and the yak-men from Dia, I was able to turn into my tent, and tie myself in my sleeping-bag for a good night's rest.

Next morning I was early astir, but the air was cold and raw, the temperature at seven o'clock being under 0° F., and the day was well advanced before we set out. The snow in the open was not more than six inches deep, and the tracks of the Kirghiz were easy to follow. This company consisted, as I was now told, of men who were attending Tahir Beg, the chief interpreter of the Chow-Kuan of Yarkand, on an official mission to Raskam, and the rumour was current that Tahir Beg was going to point out to the three envoys of the Mir of Munza the