

places which their countrymen, the Kanjuts, might occupy. I had, of course, no connection with the Kanjuts, but it was unfortunate that my journey to Raskam should be made in the track of the Chow-Kuan's interpreter, for neither Chinese nor Sarikolis would regard the coincidence as accidental.

For several miles the ascent of the Pil valley was not steep, and the track was fairly good, so that I had leisure to question the yak-men concerning the route. Taking them individually, each out of earshot of his comrades, I found that the men were in fact well acquainted with the route. Two of them became so frank as to point out the direction of the Mamakul Pass which we had to cross, but perceiving that they had committed themselves in displaying their knowledge, they became sulky, and sullenly insisted that they did not know, but only thought that the matter was as they had stated.

The ascent became steeper and the track more stony until it was concealed under snow-drift, frozen so hard as to support the yaks, which, however, occasionally broke through the upper crust. The little valley where this snow lay was fairly well sheltered, but when we passed beyond it we had to scramble up the ascent on a slippery glacier with a strong wind in our faces, while the temperature was at -8° F., or forty degrees below the freezing-point. The gradient was rather steep, the ice very slippery, the air highly rarefied, and the yaks heavily laden, so that rapid progress was impossible and frequent halts were necessary, that men and animals might regain their breath. Owing to the slowness of the motion and the frequency of the stoppages the cold was very trying, especially for the feet. I was warmly clad, but exercise was necessary to prevent stagnation of the blood. My socks were not in the best condition, but they were of the thickest wool, and even three pairs together could not