

made two holes in the ice. The first, about 20 feet from the bank, showed ice 20 inches thick; the second, in mid-stream, showed ice about 6 inches thick but covered with frozen snow about 6 inches in depth. When the holes were made there was an escape of air which, from the noise it made, appeared to have been under considerable pressure, probably slightly increased by my weight on the ice.

The man who had been sent for fresh yak returned in the afternoon with four animals, and Yul Bash had an opportunity either to offer or to decline to lead us back to Pilipert by another route. Without telling him how much I knew, I questioned Yul about the proposed route, and found that his replies were repetitions of the statements made by the boy. We all looked forward with much pleasure to the return journey, for the four marches which it would require and the four passes which would have to be crossed seemed easy compared with the labour we had undergone during our ten days' journey hither. Mohammed Joo went so far as to say that, if we returned by the old route, the baggage would vanish piece-meal before the journey's end. It was satisfactory also that neither Ram Singh nor I would have to ascend to the Topa Dawan by the steep track, which seemed to be similar to the descent from the Tugadir Pass to Sanglash. How Tahir Beg and the Kirghiz contrived to get their animals up the track to the Topa Dawan I do not know, but, as no dead bodies were found below in the jungle, it is reasonable to infer that they succeeded.

From Camp 137 we noticed, on the opposite bank of the river, a well-marked track leading probably to Mazar Sultan by way of the Ushdir Pass, which was said to be good. This track doubtless came from the head of the Mariong valley. The track on the right bank, according to Yul Bash, led to Pil, and was practicable only for