

strong enough to bear the weight of the caravan. At Tir I received his report that the ice below the mouth of the Kulan Urgi river was still too weak, and as there was thus no need to hasten from my present quarters, I set about my purposed investigation of the neighbourhood. My first excursion was to Tarim Boko, at the foot of the long and steep ascent to the Kuramut Pass. It was fortunate that we took with us only very few yaks, for the place was desolate, grass scarce, and the track slippery and stony. Close beside a frozen stream we found some rocks slightly overhanging, and beneath their shelter we spent two comfortless nights. Ram Singh and I ascended to the top of the pass, which was at once bare, sharp, and rugged, suggesting the edge of a huge razor sunk between fragments of scattered rock. The place was swept by a strong wind, and at noon, with a bright sun shining, the temperature was at -5° F., or thirty-seven degrees below the freezing-point. Ram Singh's sketching was carried on with very great difficulty. To screen him and the plane-table from the wind a felt rug was held up by two Ladakis, but they, hardy though they were, suffered from the united effects of a high wind and a low temperature. On this day Islam had set out for Yarakand for money and provisions. He had crossed the Kuramut Pass and gone some distance beyond it under the guidance of a boy, whom I had ordered to spend the night at the first village in the Asgan Sal valley, and on no account to attempt to return the same day. Next morning when I awoke I was surprised and annoyed to hear the voice of this boy. He was wretchedly clothed, and yet, disregarding my instructions, he had recrossed the pass in the small hours of the morning, when the temperature must have been quite twenty degrees below zero. When I asked him if he was frost-bitten, he said no, he was all right; and when I questioned him about his reason for