

For the distance from Burangsal to Jurab one short march was sufficient. The valley was rocky and sandy, destitute of grass, and in its winding course was such as could only be traversed in winter when the river is frozen over in many places. I had a Tajik guide and, on Tajik authority, hoped to find at Jurab two shepherds' houses and a large "ungur." On reaching the mouth of the valley, the spot indicated, I requested the guide to point out the "ungur" and he waved his hand towards the foot of a vertical cliff, where I perceived a patch of sand partially protected by a sandbank from the wind which was blowing down the valley. The two houses were not here, but at some distance up the valley. For myself and the caravan this day's march was short, but Ram Singh, an indefatigable assistant, had taken a long and difficult round of exploration. Having ascended the Burangsal valley for a short distance, he had crossed the Tarsi Pass, about 6,000 feet higher than Burangsal, and it was not till late at night that he rejoined me at Jurab. Here the bivouac was on sand; the couch was soft, and I slept comfortably till within a couple of hours of daybreak, when a squall sprang up, bringing clouds of sand, leaves, and twigs, which banished sleep and comfort. The trouble moderated when daylight came, and at breakfast the quantity of sand which mingled with my food was less than I had expected.

Ram Singh set out in the morning to execute sketching work, while I went with the caravan on a short march to the mouth of the Kichik Tung valley. When I had nearly reached this destination I was surprised to see a man in a soldier's blouse rapidly approaching. He was a messenger from Kashgar under orders to find me as quickly as possible and deliver a letter and parcel. Macartney had regarded my reference to Sonam's illness as an intimation of a case of plague in my camp, and had