

in a large ice-stream which descends far into the Raumedh valley. To the south-west across the boldly serrated crest-line of the range I could see far away the snow-covered tops of mountains belonging to Badakhshan. This region, towards which I had been drawn since my youth, was, alas, destined still to remain closed to me.

A somewhat easier descent over névé beds and then along the grey ice-wall of the glacier brought us after about seven miles to the latter's snout, and near it to the first point where it was possible to pitch camp. Thanks to arrangements made under Colonel Yagello's orders, we found here a posse of strong-limbed Roshanis waiting to relieve our hard-trying load-carriers from Shughnan. So another day's march down the Raumedh valley over a succession of old moraine terraces and then through narrow gorges allowed us to emerge into the Bartang valley close to the hamlet of Khaizhez.

The two days' journey which thence carried us down to Kala-i-Wamar sufficed to impress me with the exceptional difficulties offered to traffic by the tortuous gorges in which the Bartang river has cut its way down to the Oxus. I now understood why Roshan has always remained the least accessible of all the valleys descending from the Pamirs, and why in the stock of its people and in its traditional ways it has retained most of its early inheritance.

The line of progress lay everywhere through narrow deep-cut gorges, between towering mountain masses wildly serrated above and exceedingly steep at their foot. After crossing from Khaizhez to the right bank of the river on a raft of goat-skins, there followed a succession of trying climbs up and down precipitous rock-faces where the track led along narrow ledges or was represented only by footholds a