

Yambulak Glacier on the north, and with it the last bit of fairly level ground. Leaving my baggage behind with orders to pitch the tents, I then rode up the steep slope of moraine débris and gravel to reconnoitre the ridge above. The point where the baggage was left lay already at an elevation of over 15,000 feet, and the panting of the yaks as they struggled up over the trying slopes of loose stones and shingle showed plainly that these hardy animals felt the effects of the elevation. With their wonderful surefootedness the yaks combine a sluggishness of temper which at all times makes a ride on them a trying mode of locomotion. But I never felt this more than when we had to make our way over these steep and slippery slopes and at the same time to drag along the spare yaks that were to relieve our mounts. Comparatively safe from sticks, the use of which alone could keep the yaks to an upward track, these extra animals were ever and again twisting themselves into the wrong place.

More than an hour passed before we reached the lower end of the rocky ridge above described over which we were to make our way. The ground now became firmer, but with it too we had reached the line of snow. It lay thin at first and did not hamper our progress. But after half a mile of ascent along the crest it became deeper, and at an elevation of about 16,500 feet practically forced us to dismount. It was half-past ten by this time, and the clouds which seemed thin and fleecy in the early morning were now gathering in heavier masses above us. The point to which we had been able to force our yaks seemed the last where we could pitch a camp. The snow which covered the top of the ridge had melted on the slope which descended to the glacier several hundred feet below. The slope was not too steep for tents, but seemed otherwise to offer little advantage. Far above the region where even yaks could secure food, the spot was yet decidedly too low to serve as a convenient starting-point for a long climb on the following day.