

11 a.m., by taking Dak ponies and pressing Kirghiz animals, the needed complement of my transport was made up. The pliable factotum of the Chinese "Warden of the Passes" was for a consideration found ready even to issue in his chief's name an order for the supply of other animals at the Karauls further down the valley. When my little caravan was fairly started I could not deny myself the satisfaction of returning to the Amban the sheep he had sent, as a present that was not acceptable. The Kirghiz, in whose presence I sent my message, were evidently much tickled by the announcement.

The weather had again become cloudy and cold, quite wintry in aspect. With the clouds covering the mountains almost to their foot the wide valley, through which the river beyond Bulunkul spreads in numerous broad branches, looked like a dreary steppe in the autumn. About five miles north of Bulunkul the expanse of muddy glacier water contracts and enters by a sudden bend to the east the long defile known as Gez-Darra. At its entrance we passed a lonely Karaul, square-walled and garrisoned by a dozen Chinese soldiers—scarcely tenable as a defensive work, even in the days of matchlocks. The rest of this day's march lay along the right bank. The gorge kept narrow, and the road almost throughout led over old moraines and stony "fans." By 6.30 p.m. we passed the first serious impasse of the gorge called Janguruk. Great serrated coulisses of rugged rock, several thousand feet in height, descend from the main mountain spurs on both sides. Along the face of one of them the road is carried by a gallery, a true 'Rafik' of Hunza recollection, only that the one here was well built and gave a roadway of at least 4 feet breadth. It was getting dark between the high mountain walls when this awkward part of the route had been passed. So we had to stop for the night's camp as soon as the necessary bit of level space could be found by the river side. Here amidst sombre Alpine scenery,