

I wondered whether they ever see flowers such as carpet the Pamir grazing-grounds.

The 22nd of October was needed as a day of rest for men and beasts, and I was glad to grant it in a locality where there was at least plenty of shelter. The sky was heavy with clouds, and cold blasts swept up the valley from time to time, enveloping it in a haze of dust. After a morning spent over notes and letters I went for a walk along the stream through cheerless fields and with nothing in view but the bare grey spurs that line the valley. On my return I found the whole grown-up male population of Pisha assembled in the courtyard of the mud dwelling where my men had established themselves. It seemed that for many years past Pisha had known no such time of excitement and novel interest. In Hakim Shah, the oldest man of the valley and father of the local Yüzباشي, I found an intelligent interlocutor. He claimed an age of fully a hundred years, and his wrinkled face and snowy hair seemed to support his assertion. Though bent by the burden of his years, the old man was still active enough in mind, and he talked glibly of the days of early Chinese rule before the Muhammadan revolt. He had once in his life been to Khotan, and was evidently in the eyes of his people a man well-up in the affairs of the world.

My men had been told that a difficult and long march lay before us. So on the morning of the 23rd they were quicker than usual about the start. When I got outside my tent a little after six o'clock I saw to my delight a gloriously clear sky. The cold was also a surprise. Even at 7 a.m. the thermometer showed 23° F.; the little watercourse near my tent was hard frozen. As soon as we had climbed the edge of the plateau some 500 feet above Pisha, a grand view opened out upon the whole ice-crowned range. Kuen-lun Peak No. 5 now lay in full view to the south-east, and its glacier-crowned head appeared quite close in the absolutely clear atmosphere. For about eight miles we rode over a broad, barren plateau that