

that height, as my fingers soon felt in handling the delicate instrument.

It was nearly three o'clock before our work was done, and I was able to hurry down hill. I had noticed how distant the valley of Karanghu-tagh was where we were to finish the day's march, and the guides from Pisha had, with unwonted animation, dwelt on the badness of the track leading to it. After a comparatively easy descent of two miles we reached the line where the high plateau so far followed falls off towards the Yurung-kash Valley in a series of precipitous ravines. The one which the track follows at first looked exactly like the gorges I had seen in Astor leading down to the Indus. High rock-faces lined its sides, and the withering effects of atmospheric influences seemed here less marked than on the ranges passed northward. At an elevation of about 11,000 feet the path crossed a rocky neck eastwards, and then led down precipitously to the river flowing more than 3,000 feet below.

It was just getting dark as we began this trying part of the descent, but even if it had been broad daylight it would have been impossible to ride. The angle at which the path zigzags down the precipitous cliff was so steep that the ponies could be dragged forward only with difficulty. The loose stones that cover the path increased the trouble, while the deep dust in which they are embedded at times almost smothered us. Never had I marched in such a dust-cloud as that which enveloped us until, after an hour and a half's scramble, the bottom of the valley was reached at the point where the Yurung-kash is joined by the Kash stream flowing out from the side valley of Karanghu-tagh.

It was perfectly dark when we crossed to the left bank of the Yurung-kash by a rickety bridge consisting of three badly joined beams laid over a chasm some 70 feet wide. The foam of the river tossing deep down in the narrow bed of rocks could be made out even in the darkness. In daylight, and in a less tired condition, the crossing might have affected one's