nerves more. As it was, I felt heartily glad when I saw the
ponies safely on the other side. Karanghu-tagh means
"Mountain of blinding darkness," and at the time of our
approach the appropriateness of the name could not have been
doubted. For about an hour we and our tired beasts groped
our way between the boulder-strewn bank of the Kash stream
and the foot of steep hill-slopes before we reached at last the
village that bears that cheerful name. The baggage had
arrived safely, but also with great delay, and thus it was late
in the night before I could retire to rest.

The 24th of October was spent at Karanghu-tagh, where
arrangements had to be made for men and yaks to take us
further into the mountains. The survey of the previous day
had shown me that the only way by which the source of the
main branch of the Khotan River might possibly be approached
would lie in the gorge of the river itself. The Yüzbashi and
the old men of the little village, whom I summoned in the
morning, at first denied stoutly that the valley of the Yurung-
kash was accessible beyond the point where we had crossed it.
By-and-bye, however, I elicited the fact that there were
summer grazing-grounds in some of the nullahs descending
from Muztagh, and then the fact of their being reached by a
track up the Yurung-kash had to be acknowledged. Of a route
across the main range south, by which Mr. Johnson appears to
have come on his rapid descent from Leh to Khotan in 1865,
I could get absolutely no information. It was evident that
the hill-men feared the trouble and exposure of a tour in those
high regions. At the same time the serious and very puzzling
discrepancies I discovered between the sketch-map of Mr.
Johnson's route and the actual orography of the mountains
south of Pisha convinced me that I could not dispense with
local guidance. My interest, however, lay eastwards where
the course of the Yurung-kash was to be traced. After a
time Islam Beg, a young and energetic attendant of the
Khotan Yamen, whom Pan-Darin had despatched with me,