

where we might descend again to the river was in vain. The steep shingly slope terminated everywhere in cliffs that offered no foothold. Baffled in these endeavours, I climbed up the precipitous hillside above the ledge that had brought us so far, in the hope of turning the ravine. But after an ascent of about 1,000 feet I convinced myself that the ground beyond was one over which I could never hope to move either yaks or men with loads.

While I rested on a little projecting ridge the noise of falling stones drew my attention to a herd of wild goats (Kiyik) that were evidently about to descend from the cliffs opposite. The tracks of these animals I had already noticed on the hillside. They alone are likely ever to have penetrated into the wild gorge that lay before me. The point where a large stream from the glaciers of Muztagh falls into the Yurung-kash seemed temptingly near. Once beyond this junction there would be less difficulty in crossing the river, and consequently in ascending its bed. Yet there was no hope of reaching this point until perhaps the river was completely frozen, an eventuality for which it was impossible to wait. Even then I doubt whether a practicable passage could be found, considering the climatic conditions and the masses of fallen rock likely to be encountered.

All day an icy wind had been blowing down the valley, giving a foretaste of the cold that might be encountered at this season on the elevated plateau where, in view of our survey results, the source of the river can now be definitely located. I did not envy the yaks the bath they got in crossing back to the right bank, and was heartily glad to reach the shelter of my tent at the hour of dusk. The night was cloudy and still, and on the following morning snow was falling on the mountains down to about 3,000 feet above our camp, the elevation of which by aneroid was close to 9,000 feet. Down in the river gorge the temperature at 7 a.m. was a little higher than on previous days (34° F.), but as soon as