

Vedinkot facing the foot of the glacier. Behind it, in a bleak but sheltered little glen, is the usual camping-place. But I was eager to get my night's rest as close as I could to the Darkot. So the river was crossed just where it emerges from a deep-cut and narrow rocky gorge above the Chatiboi Glacier. It flows here as a raging torrent hemmed in by boulders and cliffs, and for the sake of my baggage I felt glad to find that the rough bridge thrown across it just a little above the glacier was still intact. That the latter has steadily advanced during recent years there could be no doubt; for its terminal wall, which Kurban had seen still washed at its foot by the river, on the occasion of Lord Kitchener's visit to the Baroghil in 1903, has now pushed completely across to the right bank with the river flowing in a tunnel below it.

Within full view of the glacier's right flank, as shown by the panoramic view (Plate I.), I pitched my camp on a small plateau overlooking the ice-filled ravine in which the stream from the Darkot finds its way to the river. It was a bleak spot, and the ground, still covered with large patches of snow, showed no sign of approaching spring. The clouds hung persistently low in spite of cold blasts up the valley; and when, to reconnoitre the Darkot, I ascended the spur behind, known as the Rukang Pass, 12,000 feet or so above the sea, over which the track to the Baroghil leads, there was little visible but the terminal moraines of its glacier and a forlorn little tarn which lower down receives its waters.

It required some optimism to make preparations for the ascent under such unpromising conditions. The men who were to help in the attempt had never visited the pass so early in the season and did not disguise their apprehensions about the venture. The depth of the snow overlying the glacier route to the pass was bound to be exceptional this year, and its surface would be softened by the bad weather of the last few days. I was hence in no way surprised when Kurban and the Shuyist headmen did their best to dissuade me. However, they were not expected to take a personal share in the attempt, and as a prolonged wait at the foot of the pass would only have increased the hard-