

Sanju the carrier had come to the end of his resources; and but for the fortunate chance which made my passage through Sanju almost coincide with Musa's arrival, the latter would have found himself stranded at some five marches' distance from his destination. The case seems an apt illustration of the exceptional difficulties which attend the use of the Kara-koram for a trade-route.

The march of August 2nd from Puski to Duwa proved very trying for the baggage animals. The dreary plateaus of gravel over which most of the march led, were intersected by a succession of four barren valleys, all cut in with steep scarps to a depth of several hundred feet. None of them now held any water, though there was plentiful evidence of the destructive erosion worked by occasional rain floods. It was curious to notice that the western slopes of these valleys showed always a deep cover of sand, while the eastern ones displayed their steeply-scoured conglomerate surface. Up the last of these valleys, the Kum-koilagan Jilga, we had to wind our way for nearly four miles, until its bottom gorge narrowed to a mere fissure. There was a perfect maze of little side gorges, while the red sandstone ridges high above showed fantastically-eroded formations, curiously recalling in miniature the weird gorges through which I had first approached the Kashgar Plain from the side of the Tokuz-dawan in 1900.

The whole way we had not met a single human being, and I was wondering how far we might have yet to travel through this wilderness of stone and dust, when suddenly from a ridge above the head of the gorge the topmost part of the Duwa oasis came into view at the bottom of a broad valley. At Sanjagiz Langar we reached the Duwa stream flowing rapidly with its cool greyish-green water in a bed about a hundred yards broad but now only half-filled. Then a three miles' ride past well-cultivated fields, where the wheat was just ripening, brought me down to the central part of the village. Green swards such as I had not seen for a long time, lined both banks of the river where we crossed it to a Bai's house and garden which were to afford quarters. The many fine walnut-trees in the neighbouring lanes and the quaintly carved woodwork