

The haze continued heavy next morning, and precluded all hope of sighting further topographical details of importance from any height within climbing reach. I had to reckon with the probability of such unfavourable atmospheric conditions continuing for some days, and decided to use these for the shifting of our base eastwards to Karanghu-tagh and the Kash River drainage. On the march back to Nissa I missed, indeed, the grand vistas of snowy peaks and ice-streams. But as the survey of the valley and its enclosing ranges was already completed, I was content to find compensation in the coolness which this veil of yellowish fog assured. By mid-day we had safely effected the several crossings above Nissa, though not without serious trouble from the swollen river, and an hour later my tent was pitched on a narrow grassy plot just below the last hut of the village. It was barely ready to afford shelter when a light but steady rain began to descend, the first which these valleys had known for many weeks. The rain continued for some four hours, and rarely had I heard the patter of its drops on the fly of my tent with more satisfaction; for I fondly hoped it would clear the atmosphere of those floating dust-clouds which had as yet interfered with distant views in these mountains.

My march on August 22nd towards Karanghu-tagh took me over ground seen already in November 1900. But the difference of the season materially affected my impressions. The valley below Nissa, confined between barren and extremely steep rock walls, 3000 to 4000 feet high, through which we had then groped our way in the dusk of an autumn evening, proved now quite rich in low jungle along the narrow river-bed. Our route had then lain by the side of the river; but now the water was so deep as to make the seven crossings within a distance of about five miles difficult even for us on horseback. For the baggage this portion of the route would have been quite impracticable, and it was fortunate that a pass, reached through the side valley of Boriz, was open to the yaks. Ponies could not have crossed it.

The loess slopes of the Pom-tagh Dawan, about 11,500 feet high, over which we crossed into the valley of the