

Kash River, the next feeder of the Yurung-kash eastwards, were now clothed with plentiful coarse grass. The night's rain had visibly revived the vegetation of these waterless spurs, and had also washed down the dust haze. Yet the grand vista of snowy peaks and glaciers eastwards which had greeted me at that height in 1900, was now completely hidden by hovering clouds.

On my descent into the Kash Valley that evening I was not surprised to find my progress to Karanghu-tagh barred by the swollen river. Yet I scarcely anticipated what time it would take to surmount this obstacle. In front of the small alluvial fan known as Ushlash, on which I pitched camp after descending the gorge from the Pomtagh Pass, the river raced past in a mighty torrent; even the hardy yaks could swim it only with difficulty. The few village elders from Karanghu-tagh who arrived in the evening had crossed by a rickety foot-bridge thrown across the river gorge at a point farther down, and so risky that the Beg who had started to meet me did not venture upon it. The hill-men were unanimous in declaring that no loads could be passed across. So it was evidently a case to bring into requisition my raft of inflated goat-skins from India. But to use it without the $\frac{3}{8}$ th-inch steel wire rope which the forethought of Major H. T. Sherwood, R.E., had provided, would have been an impossibility; for any raft or boat not thus secured was sure to be dashed to pieces on the numberless boulders by the torrent.

An inspection of the river-bed, made early in the morning with Naik Ram Singh, convinced me that the only point within reach where the steel wire could be fixed across the stream and our 'Mussuck' raft worked from it as a ferry, was at the lower end of a rift which the river had cut for its passage through a ledge of sandstone cliffs some two miles above Karanghu-tagh village (Fig. 61). Just where the river issues like a mill-stream from this rock-cut channel into a deep pool of whirling water, we found it spanned by the frail structure which the men of Karanghu-tagh called their bridge. Three roughly hewn poplar trunks had been jammed in between the rock faces, some twenty-five yards apart at this point. But from warping