

19,500 feet claimed to have penetrated the great barrier of the main Kun-lun.

My start for the head of the Busat Valley was not effected without serious trouble. The Yüz-bashi and greybeards of Karanghu-tagh did not deny that it was one of their grazing-grounds and that the approach to it was easy. But when I demanded, with a view to possible further exploration, that the men who were to accompany the few yaks needed for what little of baggage was to be taken ahead, should be provided with food for ten days, the answer was a *non possumus* clamorously uttered in chorus. The dozen men or so who had been collected, declared that more than a day's bread was not within their reach, while the 'Bais' of the settlement, men owning plentiful cattle, were equally emphatic in assurances that there was no spare grain in their houses, however tempting the rates I might offer for its purchase. In the end the suave town-bred Beg of the hill tract who assisted at these preparations undertook to arrange, by fair means or otherwise, that the men should start with adequate provisions. But it was easy to see that his authority was not equal to enforcing this victualling task, and equally clear also that the prospect of ten days' work in the high mountains had completely scared the men who were to benefit by my solicitude. Islam Beg and the Naik were left behind in charge of the ponies and spare baggage.

The march next morning up the valley proved easy, when once the light loads had been put on the yaks and their unwilling drivers set in motion; for after some five miles of steep tracks along the sides of a rocky defile the bottom of the valley widened to a series of down-like plateaus covered with short but thick grass. Here, as in the upper Nissa Valley, I could recognize ancient moraines covered by loess deposits. We had just ascended the grassy slope of the first plateau when the clouds that hung about the spurs on either side descended in drizzling rain.

It was a fit prelude to the weather which we were to experience throughout our stay in the valley. In the rain and driving mist the dirty small felt tents or 'Karaois' in which the families of the herdsmen on these uplands