

of 1900 had already retained, and for whatever lay below them my new 'station' offered a far better point of observation. At a height of about 13,000 feet we attained the top rim of the great plateau which slopes up with broad down-like undulations from the Pisha Valley. It was a striking contrast to the tortuous gorges and towering walls of rock and ice we had left behind. Before losing sight of them on the almost imperceptible watershed, I turned round in the saddle and privately registered a vow that the headwaters of the Yurung-kash were yet to see me from the east or the south, despite all obstructive forces of nature and man.

The high mountains seemed loth to let me depart; for their clouds kept still with us, and in pouring rain we accomplished the long but easy descent. I had decided to stop for some days in the Pisha Valley, partly with a view to collecting, if possible, that local information which I had failed to secure from the Karanghu-tagh people, and still more in order to use this last halt in the cool of the mountains for recording explanatory notes on the photographic panoramas brought back from this region, while all details regarding its orography were fresh in my recollection.

I had no reason to regret my decision. On the very first morning after my arrival there turned up a queer-looking individual who claimed to have found a man "knowing the way to Brinjaga." The look and manners of my informant did not inspire confidence. He claimed to be a Badakhshi by descent, and to have been a wanderer from his early youth. Where and how he had picked up his tolerably fluent Hindustani he did not explain, nor how he had found his way to these mountains. Having heard from my Dak man of my enquiries about Brinjaga, he had thought he could make himself useful; and now he had come to produce a gold-washer from the Kara-tash Valley eastwards, who had himself been to the place. All he claimed in return was some recommendation which might help him along to reach his old home in safety.

How much of this story was true I had no means of ascertaining. But after an hour or two the Kara-tash