

miner actually turned up. He looked far more reliable than the shifty adventurer who introduced him, and what he told of his visit to the 'mouth of Brinjaga' tallied remarkably well with topographical facts. He and eight associates, also gold-washers, had some ten years before been tempted to try their luck at a 'Kumat' situated by the bank of a stream that falls into the Yurung-kash east of the Busat Valley. They had proceeded there by a route that skirted the spurs overlooking the main valley from the south, evidently the track we had sighted from Kara-kir. They had thus reached the debouchure of a side valley which they heard designated as the 'mouth of Brinjaga'; but the latter itself they had not seen, and access to it, they were told, became possible only in the late autumn or winter. The sand they washed did not prove very paying, and the party therefore soon retraced their steps to Khushlash-langar. It was a simple straightforward account, unmistakably pointing to the Chomsha Valley as the location of that 'Brinjaga' which had seemed to keep ever floating in mythical haze. Daud, the gold-seeker, was ready to guide us to the place he described, only one day's march from Khushlash-langar, and I thought it best to let him repeat his statements in the presence of the Karanghu-tagh people still with us.

The result was by no means encouraging. The Karanghu-tagh men obstinately clung to their cherished affirmations of complete ignorance, and declared that their yaks were worn out, and they preferred to drown themselves rather than start on fresh climbs! I left their Yüz-bashi the choice of either bringing his men to reason or of being taken to Khotan to answer to the Amban for disobeying his orders. In the presence of the recalcitrant crowd our would-be guide had grown uneasy, and I was not surprised when an hour or so later the Badakhshi disconsolately reported his disappearance. The adventurer naturally felt grieved at the prospect of losing a reward and hurriedly set off to hunt for the fugitive. But the latter knew how to keep out of the way, and neither him nor his pursuer did I see again.

The Yüz-bashi's case was settled less promptly. He