

stream fed by the snows of the main range had to be forded before we could reach our camping-ground, known as Lung-kuo-ho, in the broad scrub-covered bottom of the valley. Its height was only about 9900 feet, and with the valley open to the day's bright sunshine the air felt distinctly warmer.

The march of August 2nd was rather a trying one for the animals. With the route skirting closer and closer the north face of the great snowy range, no less than three lateral spurs had to be crossed in succession. The ascent to the first pass, called Chin-tou-an-shên, about 13,000 feet above sea, was steep though leading over grassy ridges. A small herd of cattle met here was the first and last sign that the value of these valleys for grazing is not altogether unknown to the Kan-su people.

How often thereafter had I occasion to wonder at the absolute neglect of these splendid grazing-grounds in the mountains! I need not dilate on the causes, probably racial as well as cultural, which seem to make the Chinese, where undiluted by other elements, so averse to life as herdsmen. The fact remains that mountain tracts, which could maintain tens of thousands of cattle during the summer months, and to a sufficiently hardy race would afford attractions for nomadic existence far superior to those of the Pamirs or T'ien-shan, are at present absolutely uninhabited, even during the warmest part of the year. Again and again I thought of the fine herds of cattle, horses, and sheep which Kirghiz or Mongols could raise here. But perhaps the Chinese, unwilling themselves to turn to account these opportunities for nomadic prosperity, are wise in keeping others out of them. If the nation has suffered for many centuries from its neighbours in the great plains northward, it could scarcely be expected to cherish the presence of similar troublesome nomads to the south of the long-drawn Kan-su border.

From a knoll rising to the south some two hundred feet above the pass a grand panoramic view was obtained towards the main range. From south-east to south-west there rose above us a succession of bold snowy peaks which, as the subsequent computation of the clinometrical