

up to the stirrup, and thence to the pommel of whoever was offering him a lift. Fortunately there were plenty of marmots, big red-haired fellows just as I knew them from Kashmir and the Pamirs, to afford him pleasant distraction. Sitting boldly upright over their burrows to sun themselves and shrilly whistling as we passed, they were distinctly provoking for so indefatigable a hunter as 'Dash.' But, of course, he never caught one napping.

Where the valley approached the south slopes of a broad snowy peak already surveyed from the opposite side, a bold spur from the watershed westwards made it bifurcate. The steep grassy end of this spur, over 13,000 feet high, furnished an excellent survey station. Our track led into the narrower valley south-westwards, and soon pleasing views of Alpine verdure gave way to bare slopes of detritus, and higher up to bleak cliffs of slate or schist rock. When a mile from the watershed the narrow defile opened out again, another striking change came over the scenery. After passing a gloomy rock gate I found myself among gently rounded downs of bare clay, a brilliant red-brick in colour. The snow appeared to have left them quite recently, and some pretty crocuses were just emerging.

On gaining the broad flat ridge, about 14,600 feet above the sea, which forms the Ch'iang-tzŭ-k'ou Pass, a grand and impressive panorama lay before me. To the north and north-east there stretched in a vast chain of snowy peaks the Richthofen range, with a crest-line falling nowhere, it seemed, below 16,000 feet. The only gaps visible for a distance of upwards of fifty miles were the valley far away to the north-west through which the Pei-ta Ho forces its way to the plains, and the Ma-so Ho Valley up which the day's march had lain. The whole view to the north was dominated by a grand peak, of about 18,600 feet, with a broad ice sheet descending to about the same level as where we had our 'fixing' above the pass.

But what gave true relief to this mountain panorama was the vast plateau stretching from north-west to south-east and separating the Richthofen from the next inner range, the To-lai-shan. Like a big mountain-girt basin it looked; but the trend of the many shallow valleys furrowing