

showed a temperature of fully 130 degrees Fahrenheit. It was a good place to give the animals a short rest, and to form a base from which we might effect our expedition into the unexplored valleys of the uppermost Yurung-kash.

From the very careful trigonometrical survey which Captain Deasy effected in 1897 along this part of the Polur-Ladak route, I knew that the easternmost point of the Yurung-kash head-waters lay due south of Seghiz-köl. So Lal Singh, active as ever, set out on August 16th to reconnoitre the ground in that direction, and to start a fresh net of triangles with the help of Captain Deasy's points. Yet, I confess, I felt oppressed by doubts how we should be able to penetrate into that region of difficult deep-cut valleys for which my Karanghu-tagh experiences of 1900 and 1906 had prepared me. Considering the limitation of our supplies and means of transport, a false move at the start and consequent loss of time might prove fatal to all my plans.

Fortune for once played me a good turn by bringing into my hands a guide such as I had vainly searched for among all those reticent and wily hill-men of Polur. Lal Singh on his reconnaissance had fallen in with one of a small party of Keriya people hunting for wild yaks, and I promptly despatched Niaz Akhun, the energetic Darogha who had accompanied us from Khotan, to fetch them from their camp near Seghiz-köl. Half-frozen he turned up next morning bringing the whole party of hunters—Pasa, an experienced if shifty-looking fellow (Fig 317), with three equally ragged companions half-Tibetan in appearance. Pasa, after some cross-examination, confessed that there were gold-pits still worked by small parties of Keriya people in a side valley of the Yurung-kash known as Zailik, to be reached by a couple of marches. When I explained why I wanted to get to the river's easternmost sources by a route different from that leading south of Seghiz-köl, he acknowledged that he knew tracks by which we might make an almost complete circuit of the uppermost Yurung-kash head-waters.

Of course Pasa very soon caught the infection of pretended ignorance from our unwilling and contumacious