

walled-up mouths of abandoned pits showed where many more of the victims had found their last rest. In the days of the 'old Khitai rule' and of Yakub Beg, that *soi-disant* liberator, when the digging was carried on by forced labour, this rugged gorge, with its inclement climate, must have seen more human misery than one cares to think of. Among all the desolate places of the earth to which *auri sacra fames* has led men, this forbidding ravine, cut between the most barren of mountains, with its atmosphere of Rider Haggard sensations, might well compete for the front rank.

To us the discovery of this gloomy gorge proved of great value. Leaving our camp at a small grassy plot near the central point of the present mining activity, some 13,600 feet above the sea, I managed with Lal Singh first to descend by breakneck paths to the cañon-like valley of the Yurung-kash (Fig. 320), and on subsequent days to climb commanding points on a series of high spurs coming straight down from the main Kun-lun Range northward. By establishing our survey stations in full view of its crest-line, here showing an average height of over 20,000 feet, we managed to map with theodolite, plane-table, and photographic panoramas, the greater portion of the inexpressibly grand and wild mountain system containing the unexplored eastern head-waters of the Yurung-kash. On the south, for a distance of over sixty miles, we could see them flanked by a magnificent range of snowy peaks, rising to over 23,000 feet, and all clad with glaciers more extensive than any I had so far seen in the Kun-lun.

Among the peaks to the south-west we could, fortunately, recognize several of a small group which had been triangulated over forty years earlier from high stations on the Tibetan uplands to the north of Ladak, and thus exactly determine our position. I was all the more grateful for this as, in spite of the clear weather which had set in after light snow showers, clouds enveloped the glacier-girt peak of the great Muz-tagh peak westwards which had formed so dominating a landmark for our surveys about Karanghu-tagh.

From the ridges we thus climbed above Zailik there