

slopes of detritus into veritable bogs, very difficult to cross for animals already suffering from the effects of great altitude, exposure, and an almost total absence of grazing.

Such conditions made the march, on September 7th, along the broad basin of the Keriya River sources extremely tiring, even though most of the ground was a level plain (Fig. 331). Whenever the sun broke through between the snow-storms my eyes could revel in the glorious glacier array to the west, with wonderful bluish tints in its shadows. There were plenty of interesting geographical features to observe here, *e.g.* about the wholly impassable gorge by which the infant Keriya River, like the Yurung-kash, escapes from the cradle of its birth. But however stimulating these impressions, they could not let me forget the misery of that night's camp. The exhaustion of the animals obliged us to halt by the side of a long lagoon. The ground was so sodden that men and animals alike felt glad to huddle on a narrow ridge of sand fringing the shore. An icy gale, driving snow at intervals, passed over us all the night. Apart from their rations of oats there was absolutely nothing for the animals to eat. No wonder that next morning the first victim remained behind at this dismal camp. It was a poor pony, unable to move, which a carbine bullet put out of pain.

That day, too, most of our efforts had to be spent in extricating tired animals from foundering in the detritus mud, and in finding tracks round impassable bogs. It was almost a relief to have to climb up a spur close on 18,000 feet high, which crossed our route, as it meant temporary escape from these miseries. Curiously enough we had already crossed below it the almost imperceptible watershed which divides the Keriya River drainage from that of Lake Lighten. The wide valley beyond the spur had so level a bottom that even Lal Singh's experienced eye at first mistook the direction in which it was trending.

It was a great relief for us all when at last the flood-beds meandering over the sodden plain united in a well-defined channel and a sandy plateau came in sight. There were wild asses grazing on the scanty tufts of 'yellow grass,' and when by nightfall we pitched camp