

sunshine still intensified all the colours of the scene when we pitched camp here, and it was refreshing to see our hard-trying animals revel in the pasture, such as it was, while the warmth of the setting sun lasted. But their treat did not last long, for by nightfall a snow-storm was again sweeping down from the mountains.

On September 11th we started under a sky grey with snow-laden clouds for the western extremity of the lake. A bluff rocky promontory soon stopped progress by the shore, and forced us to ascend a valley behind it in the hope of finding a passage practicable for the animals higher up. The western bearing of this valley tempted us to follow it right up to its head, which promised a 'short cut' towards the great depression expected beyond the lake. We reached the previously sighted saddle, about 17,700 feet above sea, without serious trouble early in the afternoon; and in spite of the driving sleet and the snow which covered the ground, could have made good our object if only our baggage train had followed us. But the faint-hearted drivers, afraid of the pass, had preferred to lag behind, deceiving Ibrahim Beg with a forged message. By the time we had gone back to fetch them it was too late to cross the pass, and we had to descend again into the valley for the night's camp. It meant practically the loss of a day, and the icy gale which howled all night did not help to raise our spirits.

Next morning we discovered a passage practicable for laden animals over the low but precipitous ridge fringing the lake shore. The descent was made, and after six miles we reached a low spur which overlooked the westernmost inlet of the lake. Wild asses were grazing here in small groups, but with their usual shyness effectively evaded our rifles. As soon as we turned the spur a great change took place in the landscape. We found ourselves in a wide depression edged on the south by a low range of red hills, apparently sandstone, stretching far away westwards and on the north by the foot of the great snowy range behind which lay the Yurung-kash Valley. Here at last I felt assured about our hoped-for route. Undismayed by repeated snow-showers and an icy gale, our column moved