

westwards. Both were overlooked by a towering snow-capped range. It was clearly a part of the main Kun-lun watershed behind which lay Karanghu-tagh, and the valleys before us could only drain to the Kara-kash. So no further effort need be exacted from our weary animals, and the relief this gave me was great.

As we descended in the nearer valley, which for a mile or so had more the appearance of a narrow flat-bottomed basin, we found its bed of soft detritus traversed by numerous tracks of wild yaks and asses. Suddenly my eyes caught recent-looking footprints of two men. Were these Kirghiz who had come to hunt or—to look out for us? Lower down, the valley narrowed and a deep-cut ravine in its centre disclosed on its right side the remains of a huge moraine. The masses of ice-worn granite boulders lay bare to a height of over one hundred feet.

A fairly good track wound along them, marked with well-preserved cairns, and brought us down to the junction with the second valley, which contained a swift snow-fed stream. This, spreading out amidst a flat boulder-strewn space at the junction, gave life to a modest amount of vegetation, and just below the confluence we found a roughly built shelter formed by walls of unhewn stones around some big overhanging rocks. It could not be anything else but the 'Haji Langar' which old Satip-aldi, the Kirghiz Beg, had mentioned as having been built by Haji Habibullah's order where his route crossed the Kara-kash valley.

So after all hardships the goal of our expedition was safely reached, just when we had no more fodder to offer to the much-tried animals. But it was bitter to think of brave 'Badakhshi' lying stiff and cold in that forbidding dead waste of salt, as I watched the other ponies ravenously enjoying the grazing, limited as it was. Of course, we stopped here for the night, and the men, comfortably sheltered from the icy wind blowing up the valley, blessed the memory of 'Haji Padshah' who had built this Langar to succour weary wayfarers.

I, too, felt grateful to the rebel ruler who, during his brief spell of power, had taken such trouble to mark the