

no trace of erosion having damaged the inclines thus supported. It was strange to come upon this bit of road-making on a long-forgotten route. How long would it last? Beyond, the track ascended at the bottom of a boulder-filled gorge coming from the range north. After a mile we passed a small stone enclosure under a sheltering rock wall, and in front of it found a large heap of mouldering Burtze roots, just as the last travellers must have left it over forty years before. On all sides was evidence of the extraordinary dryness of this region.

At about six and a half miles from the debouchure we passed what proved the last cairn, and higher up the bottom of the gorge considerably narrowed, being hemmed in by huge cliffs of what looked like gneiss. A short distance farther on the gradient became steep, and just there two ravines met, one coming from a glacier snout visible about a mile and a half off to the north, and the other from a snow-filled side valley opening towards the east. The ridges above the latter showed no marked depression and seemed to rise to fully 20,000 feet. Proceeding up the northern ravine we soon came to a spot where it widened slightly, receiving branches from the north-west and north-east, and there we pitched camp in a grim wilderness of rock, detritus, and snow, at an elevation of close on 16,700 feet.

Two of the Kirghiz told us that about sixteen days before, when sent by Satip-aldi Beg to look out for us, they had of their own accord reconnoitred the glacier above in search of the 'Yangi Dawan' they knew of by tradition. After a steep ascent along the rocks flanking the glacier from the west, they had found the surface of the ice practicable and, with its gentle snow-covered slope, apparently affording a possible approach to the watershed; but snowy weather had prevented them from ascending to this.

The description of the Kirghiz, plain and matter-of-fact like their persons, lent support to the belief that the depression they had seen in the range was really the looked-for pass. Apart from the necessity of settling this point, several considerations made me anxious to reach the