



Aquarell by Hermann de Schlagintweit Sakimlinski, August 1856. No. 576.

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The Chain of the Kuenlün, from Súngal, in Turkistán.

Lat. North 36° 8'

Long. East of Green 78° 5'

Height: 13,215 Engl. feet.

The Karakásh valley, 3440 feet in breadth, forms here the southern foot of the Kuenlün; a little below the halting place the river breaks through the chain. It has come down from the crest of the Karakórum, this being the principal watershed. From that crest also the Yárkand and Kória rivers descend to the plains of Turkistán; their course in this regard is in perfect analogy with the southerly direction of the Dihóng Sátlej, and Indus across the Himálaya. The passage of the Kuenlün, 23rd August 1856, (the first essayed by Europeans, and as far as I know, only repeated till now by my brother Adolphe in 1857) confirmed its secondary character. In my camp here we are all in Turkistán dress; I was accompanied by my brother Robert and eight natives. I had wished to avoid the ordinary Yárkand route, which does not lead across the chain but round the western end of the Kuenlün, and which would also have been less safe for passing unobserved. We had then been travelling 21 days already through uninhabited regions; the want of supplies and the wretched condition of our horses now forced me to attempt a passage, but we could take with us only three of the native attendants and four horses. Two of the latter were lost in crossing, from cold and fatigue. For topographical details, so numerous where every object is a novelty, I refer to the Panoramic Profile N° 17, Plate VII. The mountain Damirtásh, on the left bank, a dark rock partly covered with drifting sands, is the first volcanic traprock met with in the north of India.