

chanceful meeting at Tiflis seemed a superlative machiavellianism, invented to cover some international deviltry. The combination of an American, going as far as he could towards Lhasa, with a Frenchman who thought he also might make the venture, but would first go only to Kashgar, meantime telegraphing to Paris for further instructions—all this, occurring at military Osh, doubtless seemed to Russian official minds a thing to outwardly approve and inwardly doubt. However, we were at last able to canter away from the Residency, hats off to Madame and Mademoiselle, feigning ease, all of us, as to the Colonel's non-appearance.

Our little caravan of seven ponies was now well under way: we were off for Kashgar, about two hundred and fifty miles south-east, in Chinese Turkestan. There we must reorganise, for these men from Osh would go no farther. We had engaged a good-humoured Sart as cook and general helper. There were three men to take care of the ponies with burdens. We had paid the proper head man at Osh half the caravan hire, which amounted to \$7.00 per pony for the whole journey. The Sart was to have \$12.50 per month. Joseph was our luxury—\$2.50 per day and his food while with us, and half-pay for a reasonable period covering his return. This is princely hire, but what is to be done without an interpreter? Our food-supply had been increased by the purchase of a considerable quantity of coarse canned goods, some macaroni, rice, sugar, etc. Joseph had misunderstood Osh as a market-place, and consequently we fared badly for many days thereafter.