

kol, and a collection of Begs escorting us to a big suburban bazaar about five miles from the town. Then came horseback good-byes, our hearts quite upset at leaving the good priest behind us, and we were away to struggle with the desert, the mountain, the deathly cold, and with Achbar.

Think of it—your comfort, and, as befell us ere many moons, *your life*, depending on the painful marshalling together of about fifty words over the empty parade-ground of a boy's mind! That we came out alive has been a marvel to us—that Achbar lives, is a double marvel.

'T was a week to Polu, much like the earlier desert march, except that the oases became narrower as we entered the rougher foot-hill country, and the human type became also rougher and more sturdy. Those whom we met *en route* were shepherds driving sheep, goats, and inferior yaks down to the Khotan abattoir. The yak of moderate altitudes is doomed to slaughter. His usefulness as a moving machine is in the high places. In every village we were hospitably received, plenteous food was purchasable; often there were offerings of fruit, apparently without thought of pay. No Chinese, either official or private, were seen after leaving Khotan, but the Amban's messenger announced our coming and gave directions as to our privilege of travel. The general kindly conduct of the people toward us seemed, however, to be wholly unofficial.

In Polu we hurried our final preparations for ascent to the plateau, spurred by fear of some complication with the authorities, and by desire to cover as much ground as possible before being forced to make for