

to push on; we might reach Rudok or meet nomadic Kirghiz. So off we started.

Our guide, Caliban's double, had been ugly from the moment we crossed the pass, and Mohammed Joo had thumped him a little to keep him from balking. He was, or pretended to be, ill; remembering that the mountaineers are occasionally subject to nausea when taken to unusual elevations, we put Caliban on a pony, though none of our own men complained of anything more serious than shortening of the breath. We were then at an elevation of about sixteen thousand feet. It seemed wise to tie our Mercury to a less volatile element, and Mir Mullah was chosen for the rôle of anchor by night and shadow by day. Except for the cords that bound his legs to Mir Mullah's the fellow was well treated, and was promised backsheesh, besides the unpaid half of his hire, if he duly led us past Baba Hatun, an ancient, deserted Tibetan fort, to a point which had been agreed upon by Mohammed Joo and the Beg, and which we hoped to identify on the map. We were therefore disgusted and troubled when at the end of two long marches from the lake the guide was understood to say that we had already left Baba Hatun to the rear. Remonstrance was useless. We were told that the Beg had ordered us to be taken by another road, but that we should reach the other agreed point in two days. I remembered similar trouble in Africa. Not infrequently and not unwisely the simple native refuses to take explorers into his country if it has heretofore been free from the curiosity that finally upsets him. We wanted to be fair, and were forced