

Shahidula. Sir Mortimer Durand kept continually begging me to ask for anything which could possibly assist me, and showed a sympathy in the enterprise which encouraged me in carrying it out. On the night before I started, he said, "It is very easy for me, sitting comfortably in my drawing-room here, to ask you to go and do a thing of this sort; but you must not imagine that I do not fully realize all the hardships and difficulties you will encounter; so ask me for anything you like that can possibly help you along."

The hardships and difficulties, I think, he more than realized, for my experience is that they appear far worse in a drawing-room than anywhere else; but I was made to feel, at any rate, that I had his sympathy, and that was ample encouragement for me to do the utmost to justify the confidence that had been reposed in me. My preparations did not take long, for we were now in July, and it is only in the summer and autumn months that it is possible to travel in the mountains which had now to be explored, and arrangements had accordingly to be made as rapidly as possible. On July 5 I left Simla, spent a few days at Rawal Pindi collecting camp equipage, stores, etc., and then, on July 11, went to Abbottabad to inspect the six men of the 5th Gurkhas who had been selected to go with me. I was taken down to the orderly-room of the regiment, and there saw the six men drawn up, each with a little heap of clothing and equipment beside him, and with a crowd of envious Gurkhas gazing at them, while they themselves were looking preternaturally solemn, though it was evident that on the smallest provocation they would go off into a broad hearty chuckle. Each of them was receiving a free issue of special warm clothing, a waterproof sheet, a great-coat, etc.; they were to have extra pay while away, and they were to lead, for the next few months, a free wild life, with the chance of a fight, perhaps, before they got back again; so no wonder they were pleased with themselves and envied by