

almost continuously, as I had been obliged to do, and in future explorations of a similar kind, it would be advisable, if possible, to arrange for changes of transport.

At the camping-ground near the junction of the Ilisu with the Yarkand River, I received a letter from Captain Grombtchevsky, written in Turki, and saying that he had halted at Khaian-aksai and was anxious to meet me. I answered, in Persian and English, that I was very glad to have the opportunity of meeting so distinguished a traveller, and would arrange to encamp with him the next day.

On October 23 we marched to Khaian-aksai, leaving the valley of the Yarkand River and ascending a narrow valley whose bottom was almost choked up with the thick growth of willow trees. Rounding a spur, we saw ahead of us the little Russian camp, and on riding up to it a fine-looking man dressed in the Russian uniform came out of one of the tents and introduced himself as Captain Grombtchevsky. He was about thirty-six years, tall, and well built, and with a pleasant, genial manner. He greeted me most cordially, and introduced me to a travelling companion who was with him, Herr Conrad, a German naturalist. We had a short talk, and he then asked me to have dinner with him. This was a very substantial repast of soup and stews, washed down with a plentiful supply of vodka.

This was the first meeting of Russian and English exploring parties upon the borderlands of India, and there was much in each of us to interest the other. Captain Grombtchevsky had already been to Hunza, having made a venturesome journey across the Pamirs into that country in 1888, that is, the year before we met. It had on the present occasion been his intention, he informed me, to penetrate to the Punjab through Chitral or Kafiristan, but the Amir of Afghanistan had refused him permission to enter Afghan territory on his way there. He had accordingly come across the Pamirs, and was now