

Captain Grombtchevsky saying to me that he hoped we might meet again, either in peace at St. Petersburg or in war on the Indian frontier; in either case I might be sure of a warm welcome. I thoroughly enjoyed that meeting with a Russian officer. We and the Russians *are* rivals, but I am sure that individual Russian and English officers like each other a great deal better than they do the individuals of nations with which they are not in rivalry. We are both playing at a big game, and we should not be one jot better off for trying to conceal the fact.

On the following day, October 26, we crossed the Kurbu Pass on to the Tagh-dum-bash Pamir. The pass is an easy one, fourteen thousand seven hundred feet high, and is quite practicable for laden animals. The change of scenery now was very striking. In place of the deep ravines and precipitous mountain-sides that we had hitherto been accustomed to in the valleys of the Yarkand and Oprang Rivers, we now found great open, almost level plains, some four or five miles broad, running down between ranges of mountains only a few thousand feet higher than the valleys. Grass, too, was plentiful, and there was no need for laboriously seeking good tracks for the ponies, as on the Pamir you could go anywhere. But the wind was bitterly cold, and although the temperature at night did not usually descend below zero (Fahrenheit), yet it was very much more trying than the cold which we had been experiencing lately on the Yarkand River. There, indeed, the thermometer was quite as low as on the Pamir, but the air was generally still, and there was no wind to drive the cold right into the marrow of one's bones.

Our first encampment was at a place called Ilisu, where one of the felt tents of the Kirghiz had been prepared for me, and where the headman of the Pamir, Kuch Mohammed Bey by name, had arrived to meet me. He was not very prepossessing in appearance, and had a bad reputation for giving the