

afford to give presents for nothing. I told him that our customs were different from his, and that I was going to follow out our own custom, which was to accept a present as a present, and not pay for it. These men of Hunza were a curiously uncouth people in those days of their first contact with Europeans. They thought they had a perfect right to fleece any stranger who entered their country, and I had heard from Captain Gombtchevsky of the demands they had made upon him, and from the Kirghiz of how they practically robbed the Chinese officials who occasionally visited the country.

By midday coolies and a few ponies were collected, and a start was made for Gircha. The track was rough and difficult, and in one or two places led along the sides of cliffs into which planks had been fastened, and a rude gallery constructed in this way. The valley was very narrow, and the mountains bare, rugged, and precipitous. At Gircha was a small fort, near which we bivouacked round a fire, waiting for the baggage, which did not appear till six o'clock the next morning, as the men had been benighted on the road, and dare not, laden as they were, pass along the cliffs in the dark.

Here at Gircha we halted for a day, and were visited by Wazir Dadu, the "prime minister" of the country, and Mohammed Nazim Khan, the present ruler of Hunza, and a half-brother of Safder Ali, the then ruler. Wazir Dadu was an interesting character, as he was afterwards the leader of the opposition to the British in the Hunza campaign, which took place two years after my visit. At the close of my journey I described him in the following terms: "The Wazir is a handsome-looking man, with good features and a very fine beard. He strikes one as being a clever, shrewd man, with plenty of common sense about him; and, from what I saw, I should think he had considerable influence with the chief. He is a keen sportsman and a good shot." Next to his half-brother Humayun, the Wazir of the present ruler of Hunza,