

being the month of fast, the Ramazan, afforded a reasonable excuse for asking us to delay our onward progress. We therefore spent a very pleasant three weeks in visiting Yarkand and the vicinity. Just outside the city on the east are extensive marshes, where ducks, geese and snipe abound and afford ample occupation to the sportsman and the naturalist. Some of our party went out for a two days excursion to shoot pheasants, and returned with the veritable burgoot, golden eagle, or bear coot as called by Atkinson whose stories about the bird, nay its very existence, have been seemingly called in question. This bird is said by Atkinson to kill bears.

We were told it would kill deer, wolves, and even large game, and, being impatient to try its powers, we took several burgoots with us to the Yarkand jheels to fly them at the large geese and herons which abound there. To our surprise and disappointment the eagles would tamely alight from the falconer's arm on to the ground and take no notice of the game. Subsequent experience taught us that the story of these birds attacking large four-footed game was perfectly true, and I shall hereafter record how I saw a large wild boar brought to bay entirely by the attack of a burgoot.

On the 22nd November we were awoke at early dawn by hearing six guns fired in honor of the Eed, and music and dancing were kept up for some hours. Syud Yakúb Khan then came to take leave of us, having been summoned by the Atalik to Kashghar. We were to follow on the 28th, and it was arranged that we should send on our heavy baggage at once by carts, we ourselves following with a light camp. Carts were supplied for this purpose. These are good substantial vehicles, on two wheels six feet in diameter, and drawn by four or six horses; one horse only is in the shafts, the leaders being harnessed abreast and driven with reins by a man sitting on the front of the cart. We were much struck by the business-like way in which the carts were loaded, every box being weighed, and the number written down, and only a certain load—ten hundredweight, allowed to be put on the cart. The animals used were the ordinary Yarkand ponies, very strong and willing, who would pull through the heaviest ground in a steady determined way, performing stages of 20 and 25 miles without apparent fatigue. When one thinks of one's experience with Indian hackeries and even dâk gharries, the inevitable feeling comes over one's mind that even Indian civilization has something to learn from the wrongly called barbarous Yarkand. We afterwards found that these carts are used as omnibuses for the transport of passengers from time to time, and from our embassy quarters at Yangi Shahr we used to see such an omnibus go to and from the city of Kashghar several times a day. There are also travelling carts running regularly between Yarkand and Kashghar, making five stages in which seats are obtained at a fixed rate.

During our stay at Yarkand our relations with the Dadkhwah were of the happiest kind. By degrees he became accustomed to the idea of photography, and allowed Captains Chapman and Trotter to take likeness of his soldiers, and even admitted the camera into the court-yard of his palace, taking good care however to preserve even the skirt of his garment from falling within the range of the photographer's lens. Captain Trotter put up a sun-dial in his court-yard, and Dr. Belléw gained the hearts of the Dadkhwah and his people by his skillful operations on blind and sick patients. The day before our departure the Dadkhwah invited us to an early dinner, when the number of the respective dishes sorely tasked the appetites of the hungriest or most polite.

Sergeant Rhind won no small applause by his performance on the Highland bagpipes, but I observed that the worthy Governor of Yarkand did not bestow as much attention on the Highland costume as I expected he would do. On asking the reason, I was told that he did not like to take notice of his appearance, as evidently in his hurry to attend the Sergeant had forgotten to put on his trowsers!

Winter had quite set in when on the morning of the 28th November the British Mission left Yarkand for Kashghar. At the first 'sang' or five mile-post we crossed a wooden bridge, and rode for an hour through a well inhabited and wooded country till we came to the edge of the Karakum, literally black sandy desert. Here we were invited to alight and warm ourselves by a comfortable fire in a peasant's house, and after the usual hospitality we took leave of the Dadkwah's high officials and rode across a desolate tract of sandy hillocks and