

through the encampment the elders and the women would come forward with friendly curiosity to watch the novel invasion and to offer milk.

With ready hospitality they pitched felt tents for our reception, and kindled large fires, and then began the usual drinking of innumerable cups of tea. At night the cold was intense, the thermometer falling to 20° below zero, and was considerably aggravated by a cutting wind which found its way through the well-worn felt walls of the tents.

In this way we journeyed for several days, whiling away the time on the march with hawking hares (one hawk killed seven hares in one morning), till we came to Ayak Sughun, where we joined the direct road from Kashghar to Ush Turfan. Here Captain Trotter and Dr. Stoliczka left us to explore the country in the direction of Ush, and an account of their travels will be found elsewhere. We descended the valley leading to the plain of Artysh and came to the village of Kulti Yailak, and thence returned by Altun Artysh to Kashghar. At Kulti Yailak, while wandering through the dense grass jungle in search of pheasants, we suddenly came upon a splendid wild boar, in size far surpassing any that could be seen in India, and then it was that we had ocular proof of the powers of the burgoot. Flying at his prey he struck the boar on the hind quarters with his talons and so completely bothered and perplexed the animal, that he was brought to bay, when our Kashghar companions with young Moosa Khan at their head eagerly belaboured him with sticks, till he received his *coup de grace* from a rifle. Hunting with the spear is not known to these people and those which some of our party brought with them in the hope of sport were broken on the road.

But pleasant though our sojourn had been at Kashghar, we looked anxiously forward to the time when we could resume our ordinary travels. At one time we had hopes of making an extended exploration of the country in the north-east as far even as Lake Lóp. But various reasons combined to prevent the prosecution of these plans, and as all our business had been satisfactorily concluded, and we were a heavy expense to our generous host, I took occasion, soon after our return from Artysh to Kashghar, to press for permission to depart.

During our absence from Kashghar, the heir-apparent, Beg-Kuli-Beg, had returned from the north-east frontier, where he had successfully commanded his father's troops in engagements at Manass and other places. On my offering to pay my respects to him, an invitation was sent for all the officers to a *dejeuner* at his house in the fort, at which Syud Yakúb Khan also was present and acted as Turki interpreter for me, though I may mention that Colonel Gordon and Dr. Bellew, and notably the latter, had acquired a fair knowledge of that language during our stay. Beg-Kuli-Beg is a fine young man of about 27 years, somewhat like his father in build and height. He seemed rather shy at first, but displayed intelligence in his remarks, and was evidently interested to learn all about the first *Feringees* whom he had seen.

On the 16th March we had an interview with the Amir to take formal leave, on which occasion he reiterated his expressions of friendship and his earnest desire to cement the alliance thus favorably begun.

On the following day we took our departure from Kashghar, under the usual salute, and were accompanied part of the first stage by Syud Yakúb Khan and Ihrar Khan. On the 18th we reached Yangi Hissar, whence I despatched Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, Captains Biddulph and Trotter and Dr. Stoliczka to proceed to Wakhan; Ressaïdar Afzul Khan went ahead to announce their approach. I had sent Ibrahim Khan on the 1st January to Cabul with letters to Amir Sher Ali, in the hope that it might have been arranged that the mission should return to India *via* Badakshan and Cabul, but was in ignorance of the threatened troubles arising out of the disagreement between the Amir and his son Yakúb Khan. Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon was instructed by me to proceed no further than Wakhan till joined by me, and in the event of an unfavorable reply being received from Affghanistan, to retrace his steps to India by Yarkand and Ladakh. How well Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon carried out the expedition entrusted to his charge will be seen from his own account which is appended to this narrative.

It is no easy matter to arrange for the transport of so large a party as ours was across the Karakorum, and the month which was spent by Dr. Bellew, Captain Chapman and myself at Yangi Hissar was not more than sufficient time to enable me to complete my arrangements.