

so I was sent off to this place with my son. Guns were put into our hands, and we have been here ever since. Four months after my arrival my wife was sent to me here from Yarkand. Zemindars are never taken to be soldiers, but all men who can give no account of themselves are made to serve in the ranks. The Chinese used to take zemindars for soldiers. There is much petty theft here, but no burglary; robbers are not daring as they are in India. The first time a man is caught stealing he is led all round the bazaar and beaten, the second time he has one ear cut off, the third time his right hand. I have never heard of a man being hanged for stealing. I have never seen a man hanged. The gallows are put up to frighten people. The punishment of death is only inflicted for murder. I remember two murders while I was in Yarkand. Everybody is married, even all the soldiers: when one dies, his wife is given to another. All marriages are arranged by the Mullas. When a man wishes to get rid of his wife, he turns her out of his house, and has by the Sharyat to pay her ten tangas and give her clothes. At the end of three months she may marry again. All eatables except mutton are very cheap. A great deal of beef and horse flesh is eaten. Taxes on produce are paid in kind to the extent of four per cent. People are constantly saying that there used to be much fun and wine drinking in the time of the Chinese, now there is none. The women especially are continually lamenting this. When people were very poor they used to sell their children to the Chinese for a yamboo (£17). If at the end of a year they could repay the yamboo, the children were returned to them; if not, they were made 'Kunjrees.' The bazaars were full of 'Kunjrees' in those days: they were killed when the Andijanees took the country. When you arrived in Yarkand, it was rumoured that seven or eight hundred sahibs had come; that you had come in consequence of the visit of the Russian Embassy last year. I was in Kashghar then and saw them. The Amír is much pleased at your coming. When Mr. Shaw first came he was placed in 'nuzzurbundee' (under surveillance); so was the sahib who came afterwards to Yarkand: now the Amír knows you better, and you are allowed to go where you like. Mulla Samsakh was much pleased at your mending his gun to-day (I had put the lock to rights), he says the sahibs are very clever. You saw what a thing it was, they know how to make nothing here."

From Maralbashi I went to Charwagh, a village of about 250 inhabitants, 14 miles on the Aksu road. I was especially anxious to shoot a tiger, of which there were many about, but was unsuccessful in the sea of high grass with which the country is covered. From footprints and skins, and judging by what I was told, there was no doubt that the tiger here is altogether a smaller animal than the Indian one. He seems also to differ considerably in his habits, prowling round villages at night, killing dogs and sheep, and behaving more like an Indian panther than a tiger. The people spoke of men being killed by tigers occasionally, but it does not appear to be a common occurrence.

I had, however, good sport shooting gazelles and pheasants which abounded, and I also saw the burgoots* or trained eagles kill gazelles and foxes. I was not fortunate enough to see them kill a wolf, though they were twice flown, but the animals on both occasions being in thick bush jungle and at a great distance the birds did not sight them. Their owners, however, spoke of it as an ordinary occurrence. When the jungle is not too high, they sight their prey at a great distance, and sweep up to it without any apparent effort, however fast it may be going. Turning suddenly when over its head they strike it with unerring aim. If a fox, they grasp its throat with the powerful talon and seize it round the muzzle with the other, keeping the jaws closed with an iron grasp so that the animal is powerless. From the great ease with which an eagle disposes of a full grown fox, I could see that a wolf would have no better chance. Gazelles are seized in the same way, except those with horns, in which case the eagle first fastens on to the loins of the animal, and watching his opportunity transfers his grasp to the throat, avoiding the horns. The burgoot, however, is not very easy to manage, and requires the whole of one man's care. Its dash and courage are great, but if flown unsuccessfully once or twice, it will often sulk for the rest of the day. When it kills it is always allowed to tear at its game for a little time; the men told me that if prevented doing so while its blood was up, it would very probably attack our horses.

* The bearcoat of Atkinson.