

a commanding point, a small spring to the east of our intended course. Before striking our tents at Camp 39 we noticed a solitary Tibetan approaching, and sent one of our men to invite him into the camp. The visitor pretended to be in search of ponies which had been stolen, but we had no doubt that news of us had reached Gerge, and that this man had been sent from headquarters to watch and report on our movements. After



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some well-feigned unwillingness he agreed to lead us within sight of the tents of Gerge, which, he said, were distant two days' march.

After this agreement had been concluded we set out, the animals being heavily laden, though all of them were very emaciated, and half of them had troublesome sores on their backs. Ramzan, with his usual want of judgment, intended that the caravan should cross a lofty