

Before we left Camp 57 a few Tibetans arrived with supplies for the guides and the men in charge of the yaks. The coming of these men seemed to cause a good deal of excitement, which was explained when Ramzan found leisure to repeat to us the news they had brought. It was reported, he told us, that two of the Chukpas who had been hit by Utam Singh near Camp 31 had died. The Chukpas were much dreaded by the peaceful Tibetans, and the tidings gratified and cheered the guides, as well as inspired them with a wholesome respect for the carbines. The report seemed the more satisfactory to the natives because they believed there was then a band of Chukpas in our neighbourhood. Our visitors professed themselves most eager to attack the robbers, and we were interested in eliciting their plan of campaign. Their idea of fighting was to send us to make the onslaught while they remained behind to defend our camp. After this division of labour the plunder was to be divided also; we should hand over the yaks and sheep to our allies, and retain the mules and ponies for ourselves. To the simple Tibetans the arrangement seemed just and fair, especially as without the information they had given we should not have known that the robbers and their booty were at hand. Our guides and their friends were grievously disappointed when we told them that we had no quarrel with these Chukpas, and would not attack them except in self-defence, or for the recovery of our goods.

The visitors soon departed, and the guides, when free from the constraint of their presence, became quite friendly towards us. One of them was especially cheerful and hard working, and both assisted in building pillars on points of observation. They, of course, did not understand the purpose of the pillars, but were satisfied with Ramzan's answer: Sahibs are strange people; they do strange things, and give strange orders; but their servants