

tion it was advisable to avoid, if possible, the long and circuitous route by Leh and Yarkand, and to proceed by the Gilgit-Hunza route to the Taghdumbash Pamir. Along this route the difficulties of transport and supplies were very considerable, and it was doubtful whether the necessary permission would be granted by the Indian Government. The authorities, however, not only acceded to my application, but also enjoined their officials to render me such assistance as might be within their power, so that I had the prospect of being able to commence survey work immediately after crossing the frontier, and of achieving my first purpose before any great fall of snow could retard operations.

For this, as for the earlier expedition, caravan preparations had to be made at Srinagar, but as it was my intention to winter in Turkestan and enter Tibet from the north in the following summer, the preliminary work was on a much smaller scale than in 1896.

Owing to the demand for troops for the Tirah Field Force then being mobilised, I was deprived of a companion who had intended joining the expedition, but, fortunately, R. P. Cobbold, late of the 60th Rifles, who was then in Srinagar, obtained leave and became my fellow-traveller as far as the Taghdumbash Pamir. The assistant-surveyor, formerly lent to me by the Indian Survey Department, had been murdered during an expedition undertaken by Pottinger, but a fresh man, Dalbir Rai, trained at Dehra Dun, was now supplied. As my connection with the army and the Government of India had ceased, I was at a loss for a young and trustworthy man to act as orderly. Many old pensioners from native regiments could easily have been procured, but youth was as essential as staunchness. While dining one night with the 3rd Madras Lancers at Secunderabad I happened to mention the matter, and the commanding officer, Major