

## CHAPTER XIII

Preparations at Yarkand—Fourth attempt to explore valley of Yarkand River—Route followed—Dentistry—The Khandar Dawan—Lying Tajiks—Wacha or Uchi—Reception by Ming Bashi and headmen—Return to Gombaz—Visit from Sher Mohammed—Airy tents—Measuring bases—Fine views of Muz Tagh Ata—Its height—Hard work—Arrival of Ram Singh—Error in longitude of Gombaz—No information obtainable—Start for Mariong—Mariong—No Pamir—False information—Nosh Tung—The Yarkand River—Lying natives—Steep gravel slope—Camp in jungle—Bad track—No route.

AT Yarkand I missed the cheerful companionship of the friends with whom I had become acquainted in the spring; even Mr. Backl nd had gone. Dr. Josef Messrur, the Persian missionary, was still here, however, and he bestowed kind attention on Utam Singh, who had much improved in health since leaving Kiria, though he still suffered from an enlarged spleen. I had applied to the Indian Survey Department for an assistant in place of Dalbir Rai, and had been promised a new man, Ram Singh, who was now on the way to join me.

After a few days' rest I gave my time entirely to preparation for the winter journey into Sarikol, a region about which I knew very little. The caravan men were put to the work of oiling yak dans, repairing pack saddles, and making new ones for the ponies and donkeys recently purchased. I laid in supplies of flour, rice, salt, tea, ghee, spices, and (for my own use) a little sugar; horseshoes