

remnants of their former selves. The descent to Pilipert was not steep, but was stony and slippery from the new-fallen snow. Early in the afternoon we reached Pilipert, and I was cheered by the sight of a supply of firewood outside one of the stone huts. This firewood indicated more than fuel, for I had instructed the men who took the ponies and donkeys to the Kulan Urgi valley to urge my friends among the Kirghiz at Zad, to send to this place two loads of wood and also several yaks to carry my baggage into their valley. On reaching Pilipert my appearance was like that of Father Christmas, for, to say nothing of my clothes, my beard and moustache were white with snow and fringed with icicles. Entering the only unoccupied stone hut, I seated myself on the ground before a large fire and, though the cold wind easily penetrated the roughly-built walls and chilled the side of my body which happened to be turned away from the fire, I soon cleared my visage and prepared for work. The cloudy, snowy weather was inauspicious, but nevertheless, being desirous of making observations for rating purposes, I unpacked the theodolite and waited patiently for the sun to shine forth in his brightness. That orb, however, sank in obscurity behind the mountain-tops, and, chilled and disappointed, I turned in to dinner. Of that repast I partook in comparative comfort, with a kit-bag for a chair, my knees for a table, and the caravan men scattered about in various attitudes for company. The dining-hut was draughty with freezing currents of air, but on the whole the conditions were satisfactory, and my equanimity was restored. Going outside again, I saw the shining stars, made the necessary observations and computations, and then with a mind at ease had a bright fire lighted in front of my tent so that I might enjoy its cheerful glow. Among my stores I found supplies suitable to the occasion, and, sitting on the