

been the boy's ambition to become the owner of two goats, and he was more than satisfied with his reward, which, as I explained to the men, was bestowed because he had always been helpful, and never troublesome. I referred to the hardships and delay to which we had been subjected by the stubbornness and falsehood of the men, to whom I would give no backsheesh, but I acknowledged some little indebtedness to Yul Bash for his guidance from Dia to Pilipert. Yul Bash looked with scorn at the pittance I gave him for that service, and asserted with great volubility that he had been my guide to Raskam and back. When he had finished his protestations I reminded him that he had not guided me at all during the journey from Pilipert to Raskam and back; that he had persistently asserted that he knew nothing of the country and nothing of the route to the Yarkand River, which I had discovered for myself. Admitting that there was some truth in this, he still claimed to have told me of the return route; but here again he was confronted with his own statement, for he had told me that he only knew of that route from information supplied by the men who brought the fresh yaks to Camp 137. Yul Bash had strength of character and force of will; he was well able to play his own game, and it would have been mere softness on my part to give him or the men he influenced any gratuity after the privations and toil which had resulted from their conduct.

It was without regret that I set out from Pilipert for the more genial climate of Kulan Urgi, where I was sure of a favourable reception at the hands of my friends the Kirghiz. One day's march had to take me as far as Issok Bulok Agzi, and, with two passes to cross, it was necessary to move at a steady pace. The Piyek Pass, about 16,000 feet, presented a fairly gradual though very stony ascent, and from its top we obtained an excellent view